1-1-1977

Localism in Joseph Chamberlain's Social Politics, 1869-1895.

Everett Parker Hall
University of Massachusetts Amherst

LOCALISM IN JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN'S SOCIAL POLITICS, 1869-1895

A Dissertation Presented

by

EVERETT PARKER HALL, JR.

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1977

History

30✓

LOCALISM IN JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN'S SOCIAL POLITICS, 1869-1895

A Dissertation Presented

By

EVERETT PARKER HALL, JR.

Approved as to style and content by:

Marvin Swartz, Chairperson of Committee

Franklin B. Wickwire, Member

Michael Wolff, Member

Gerald McFarland, Chairman
History Department

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Localism in Joseph Chamberlain's Social Politics, 1869-1895

Everett Parker Hall, Jr.

Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, 1977

Directed by: Marvin Swartz

This dissertation analyzes the Radical career of Joseph Chamberlain in terms of the social and political context in which he operated. It examines his relationship to a single social-political force, localism, in order to show the ways in which Chamberlain was a representative figure in English social politics of the late nineteenth century. Through this analysis, the dissertation illuminates the wider social process in which Chamberlain was involved: the incorporation of Nonconformists, industrialists and provincial political elites into the British national elite, and their growing defensive posture in the face of the rise of Labour. Methodologically, the dissertation tries to explain the struggle for power in terms of changes in the sources of power.

Localism was a force in late nineteenth century British politics which reinforced political organization based on community structure, and retarded the development of political organization based on class structure. It presupposed that the basic unit of national politics would be the local

community rather than some portion of it. State expansion, when necessary, was to take place through local government rather than through a central bureaucracy. On the local level, localism encompassed local government, politics, economic relations, and social structure.

Joseph Chamberlain was a vigorous proponent of localism. His approach to local government and politics was consolidated when he was Mayor of Birmingham from 1873 to 1876. He united the reform party in the Town Council with the electoral power of the Birmingham Liberal Association, producing a sustained reform effort, and assuring the supremacy of his own social group in the town's politics. His later social prescriptions all bore a family resemblance to his greatest successes as Mayor: the municipalization of the town's gas and water companies, and the Birmingham Improvement Scheme. Within a narrowly defined sphere of operation, Chamberlain saw local government as more efficient than national government or private enterprise. This was its charter to act, but only businessman dominance of local government could assure that efficiency.

In 1877, Chamberlain organized the National Liberal Federation as a coalition of provincial political elites. Though never a true coalition, the Federation helped propel Chamberlain into office in 1880. The rise of English socialism after 1882 threatened the communitarian basis of his politics. He responded by becoming more vocally radical,

and succeeded in convincing Gladstone to reunite Liberals and Radicals behind the old cry of franchise reform.

Chamberlain's localistic politics came apart in the election of 1885. He was caught between his efforts to appeal to new working class voters and his need to hold onto old Nonconformist supporters. His weakness after the election made him powerless to stop Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule, and he was repudiated by most of his own followers.

By 1895, Chamberlain re-established himself as a leading Unionist. As his Radicalism faded, so did his localism. His programs of the 1890s, old age pensions and employers' liability, were nation-centered rather than localistic. After 1889, he joined the reaction against the New Unionism, and he became a critic of the London Progressives. When he joined the Conservative attack on the London County Council in 1895, he repudiated his own past.

Though Chamberlain was a strong proponent of localism, he had no particular interest in local government reform unless it was tied to wider issues of power. He consistently pushed it aside for more important issues. He favored a local government bill only in 1886, when he tried to use it to block Home Rule, and in 1888, when he needed it to demonstrate to his followers that he had some influence over the Tories.

C O N T E N T S

P R E F A C E

Historians are revising their estimates of some parts of Joseph Chamberlain's career. The standard biography is J. L. Garvin and Julian Amery, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932-1970). But, Garvin completed his third volume in 1934, and recent works have challenged some of his interpretations. Though several monographs and articles have reinterpreted specific parts of Chamberlain's life,[1] they have had less impact upon the overall assessment of him than works which have considered Chamberlain in the context of the realignment of British politics in the late nineteenth century.[2] These works focus on matters foreign to the biographical format. Joseph Chamberlain was a representative figure and drew much of his power from that fact. Rather than moving the social and political forces of his age, he was moved by them.

---

[1]These articles and monographs are listed under Joseph Chamberlain in the secondary works section of the bibliography.

[2]There are important discussions of Chamberlain in the following works: Michael Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism: The Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94 (N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1975), Thomas W. Heyck, The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland, 1874-95 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), and Willard Wolfe, From Radicalism to Socialism: Men and Ideas in the Formation of Fabian Socialist Doctrines, 1881-1889 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

Any study of Chamberlain's career must examine the social basis of politics in the late Victorian age.

Between 1869, when Chamberlain's political career began, and 1906, when it ended, the groups which he represented--provincial political elites, successful industrialists, and Nonconformists--were admitted to Britain's national political elite. The new establishment thus created confronted the most politically active elements of the working class, who had been their allies before admission. The newly admitted members of the establishment passed from the offense to the defense--from attacking the privileges of the aristocracy to resisting the demands of Labour for legislation and parliamentary representation.

As one political effect of this realignment, many members of the middle class changed their party allegiance. There was a steady movement of middle class voters to the Conservative party throughout the period, while the Liberals made up much of the loss by extending their support among the working class majority of the electorate. But, the Liberals' gains were threatened by the rise of an independent Labour party.

Historians have studied this process from the perspective of the major political party leaders and organizations: the rise of working class militancy, the growth of middle class strength within the Conservative party, and the rise

of the New Liberalism.[3] But, the history of those middle class politicians who crossed over to Conservatism has not been examined as closely. The largest single secession from the Liberal party was the Liberal Unionist split of 1886. Among the ninety-three Liberal Members of Parliament who voted against the Home Rule bill, thirty-two were Radicals led by Joseph Chamberlain. Most of them were businessmen, and they did not differ demographically from the eighty percent of Radical M.P.s who supported Home Rule.[4] They joined the Tories on the single issue of Ireland, and were forced to sacrifice many of their other goals later, in order to maintain the alliance. Liberal Unionism declined rapidly after 1886, but Chamberlain was able to emerge as a powerful subordinate leader of the Unionist alliance by 1895. He

---

[3]For the rise of Labour, see: Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), and Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain (London: Macmillan and Company, 1968), E. J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men (N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1964). For Conservatism, see James Cornford, "The Transformation of Conservatism in the Late Nineteenth Century", Victorian Studies, 7 (September, 1963):35-66, Paul Smith, Disraelian Conservatism and Social Reform (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), and E. J. Feuchtwanger, Disraeli, Democracy and the Tory Party: Conservative Leadership and Organization After the Second Reform Bill (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968). For the New Liberalism, see D. A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: A Study in Leadership and Policy (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), H. V. Emy, Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, and Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism.

[4]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, p. 146.

did this by close attention to the sources of power.

As class became a more important determinant of political allegiance, the forces which had supported Victorian Radicalism declined. Nonconformity faded as a political force after 1885. The strength of local allegiances waned, though more slowly than Nonconformity. The decline threatened the sources of Chamberlain's power. He spent his career trying to prevent the polarization of politics along class lines. He tried to channel working class political aspirations toward Radical and Nonconformist goals, and his political ideology stressed community values over class values. In his home base of Birmingham, Chamberlain welded together a leadership of Nonconformist businessmen and a mass following of middle and working class voters. He tried to extend his system throughout the kingdom, despite the fact that other cities had a stronger history of class conflict than Birmingham. Even when his efforts failed, his proposals for social reform presupposed such an alliance. For Chamberlain, his local system was a mechanism of political and social action which could be used to solve a range of social problems. It was a key factor in his social politics.

One distinction should be made for the purposes of this dissertation. Looked at in traditional categories, local government and local party organization were separate elements of Chamberlain's local power. But, he welded the two

into one structure. In analyzing Chamberlain's politics, we should be aware of two senses of local government. First, it was a constitutional and administrative structure. This sense of local government was the subject of the debate when a local government bill was passed. But, every participant in the debate had in mind an already existing set of power relations: who would control it, how they would control it, and the opportunities which that control offered. This second sense was a living model of local government as it actually functioned. I refer to local government in this wider sense as localism.

Localism, as a force in politics, encompassed several meanings besides attachment to a particular locality. Within a locality, it encompassed local government, local politics (including local rivalries over parliamentary representation) and the local economic and social structure. Its force depended upon the degree of autonomy and social unity enjoyed by the locality. As a force in national politics, localism assured that the basic unit in national coalitions would be the local community, rather than some portion of it. As a political philosophy, localism favored state expansion through local government rather than through the central bureaucracy. In this form, localism was so widespread as to be the conventional wisdom of the late Victorian age. Different political positions emerged over the ways that the components of localism should be related.

This dissertation concentrates on Joseph Chamberlain's position and its relation to his social politics.

This dissertation is not a biography, though it surveys twenty-five years of Joseph Chamberlain's life. A biography concentrates on what is unique about an individual, while we shall be interested in much that is typical about Chamberlain. Localism is the avenue through which we shall approach the larger issues of late Victorian politics. Localism was central to Chamberlain's social politics. Almost every element of his social program was filtered through it. This fact poses a research problem. Chamberlain was not a theoritician--in fact, he was a very unoriginal thinker--and left no comprehensive exposition of his views. But, his general attitude toward localism can be explicated from the specific positions he took on the issues which impinged upon localism.

This dissertation has three goals. It focuses on the social politics of Joseph Chamberlain as reflected in localism and local government. I will analyze Joseph Chamberlain's social views as expressed in his politics. The second goal is wider: to illuminate the social process in which Chamberlain participated. His own career exemplified the arrival of the provincial bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century and their transition to a defensive stature in the British polity. The third goal is methodological. I wish to examine the connection of parliamentary and Cabinet

politics with these broader social and political movements. Too often, historians discuss "high politics" in isolation from consideration of the sources of power. Such an isolation is artificial because the historical actors were not themselves so isolated. The realities of power permeated their daily existence. There is a recent trend in the historiography of this period which emphasises politics as a "great game" in which political leaders make moves solely in reference to each other.[5] At best, this approach is too narrow, because it must exclude much of the social matrix in which these leaders operated. At worst, it is nothing more than a defense of traditional sources--primarily diaries and correspondence--by declaring that other sources are unimportant.[6] However, it is easier for me to criticise the approach I do not like than to replace it with one I do. I regard the process of developing a proper methodology as incomplete at this writing. I trust, however, that this dissertation moves in the right direction.

---

[5]The following works exemplify this approach: Maurice Cowling, Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution: The Passing of the Second Reform Bill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), Andrew Jones, The Politics of Reform, 1884 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), and A. B. Cooke and John Vincent, The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Britain, 1885-86 (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1974).

[6]Cooke and Vincent do this in their chapter, "Small Men and Lesser Archives: The Unimportance of the Unimportant", The Governing Passion, pp. 134-61.

I wish to thank the following people for their help in the preparation of this dissertation.

David M. Aronson was especially helpful for the material on Birmingham, Jesse Collings, and the land issue. He also gave me support and encouragement in the darkest hours, as I wandered through the thickets of the local government issue. I can never adequately thank him for this support.

Professor Marvin Swartz, my dissertation director, kept constantly in view the need for unity in a topic that constantly threatened to fly apart. Many of his prescriptions for writing and organization were valuable.

My proofreaders, R. Frederick Twenter, Marilyn Denny, and Walter Denny, were very helpful at a time of intense pressure.

My family made an indirect but vital contribution: financial support.

P A R T I

L O C A L I S M

During the late nineteenth century, a nation-wide social structure solidified in Great Britain. Heretofore, the industrial towns had differed from each other in important ways, as all had differed from the smaller towns and the countryside. In the early 1870s, the great provincial towns were at the height of their political importance and their social integration. After that, their growing size and the solidification of national class alignments began to pull them apart. Politically, the politics of class began to supersede the politics of community.

Localism was a force which strengthened the politics of community. It supported the rule of local elites in both municipal and parliamentary politics. In the great provincial towns, the beneficiaries of this force were businessmen, Nonconformists, and Radicals. These groups sought to counteract the growth of political organization based on class, which threatened their rule. Though a fading force, localism retained some power throughout the century. The class basis of politics was not really advanced until the 1890s. In some towns, such as Birmingham, the old community basis of politics was maintained well into the twentieth century.

Joseph Chamberlain erected localism into a virtual ideology. For him, local government was not an isolated

constitutional and administrative system. It was closely tied to the other components of localism: local politics, economic relations and social structure. He tried to establish this system in practice while he was Mayor of Birmingham, and he advocated it for other towns when he was a national political figure. In his social politics, localism provided Chamberlain with a series of ready solutions for social problems. Thus, it was a building block of his entire approach to politics.

C H A P T E R I

LOCALISM AND THE MIDDLE CLASS IN THE 1870s

We shall begin by considering in what ways Joseph Chamberlain was typical of other people in late Victorian politics. One way we may do this is to consider what groups he belonged to, and the extent to which he represented them. Then, by considering the institutions of these groups, and their position in society, we can describe the social and political matrix in which Chamberlain operated at the beginning of his career.

i

Joseph Chamberlain was, first of all, a wealthy businessman. He was born in London in 1836, the son of a Unitarian shoemaker, also named Joseph Chamberlain.[1] He was educated in Nonconformist schools and at London University until age fifteen, when he entered his father's trade. In 1854, his uncle, Joseph Nettlefold, purchased the English license for an American patent to manufacture wood screws by a new mechanical process. The elder Joseph Chamberlain

---

[1] It was a family tradition to name the eldest son Joseph. The Joseph Chamberlain with whom we are concerned was at least the third of the name. He named his eldest son Joseph Austen Chamberlain, and the name has continued for at least two generations since.

invested in the license and sent his eighteen year old son to the firm's headquarters in Birmingham to supervise the investment. The younger Joseph Chamberlain rapidly rose to become the financial and sales manager of Chamberlain and Nettlefold. He developed superior sales techniques to match the superior product which the American patent gave the firm. In the late 1860s, he became a leader of the new movement for the rationalization of industry. An excellent negotiator, he absorbed the firm's two largest rivals and soon gained an effective monopoly of the trade in Great Britain.

According to Chamberlain, the expansion of Chamberlain and Nettlefold brought great benefits to its work force: healthier work places, regular hours, economy of labor, increased demand, lower prices, and higher wages. The firm enjoyed excellent labor relations during his tenure. There were no strikes or lockouts; Chamberlain was treasurer of a workingman's club supported by the firm, and he was popular among the "hands". When Chamberlain retired from the firm in 1874, they held a ceremony and presented him with gifts. His reputation among the West Midlands working classes was sufficient for him to be called in as an arbitrator in labor disputes. His reputation for fairness to labor brought him strong working class support at elections.[2]

---

[2]J. L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 1: 1836-1885: Chamberlain and Democracy (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932), pp. 171-75. Elsie E. Gulley, Joseph Cham-

In his religious affiliation, Chamberlain was a Unitarian, a member of one of the Nonconformist or Dissenting groups who made up approximately half of English Protestants. They nursed hereditary grievances against the Church of England and the aristocracy which supported it. Chamberlain always spoke with pride of an ancestor who was turned out of his pastorate in 1662 rather than conform to Anglican doctrine.[3] Influenced by their history as a persecuted minority, many Nonconformists supported measures of social and political reform: temperance, religious equality, education, sanitary reform, and political democracy. The organizations they formed to advance these causes extensively used established techniques for influencing Parliament through public opinion. Their innovations in winning public support were later taken over by the established political parties when they sought to improve their electoral organization.

In national politics, Chamberlain was a Radical. In the words of one historian, the Radicals were "not a party, but a persuasion of considerable distinctiveness and sig-

---

berlain and English Social Politics (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1926), pp. 241-42. William J. Davis, "Early Recollections of a Great Statesman", The Searchlight of Greater Birmingham, November 13, 1913, p. 23. Joseph Chamberlain, "The Manufacture of Iron Wood Screws", The Resources, Products and Industrial History of Birmingham, ed. Samuel Timmins (London: R. Hardwicke, 1866; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass and Company, 1967), p. 605.

[3]Garvin, Chamberlain 2:5-6.

nificance." Most Radicals belonged to the Liberal Party. Radicalism attracted many of the one-issue crusaders. No one Radical advocated all of the reforms associated with Radicalism, but there was a family resemblance among the reforms. A continuous English Radical tradition reached back to the French Revolution, with antecedents in the English Civil War. The Radical approach to politics was both utilitarian and moralistic. The Radicals' greatest common attribute was hostility to privilege, particularly those aristocratic rights enshrined in law. Because of this characteristic, Radicalism attracted middle class Nonconformists who resented the privileged position of Anglicanism, and the most politically conscious members of the working class. It provided a common political ground between the two groups, and gave them concrete targets for joint political action.[4]

Though their long-range political goals were incompatible, middle class and working class Radicals cooperated closely through the 1870s. All Radicals favored greater democracy as a counterpoise to privilege, though they differed on the precise limit of its extension. The battle of aristocracy versus the people was a fruitful source of Radical rhetoric, and one Chamberlain exploited fully. As

---

[4]Thomas W. Heyck, The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland, 1874-1895 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 5-6, quote from p. ix.

long as he could keep working class voters convinced that he and other businessmen were their natural leaders, his Radicalism would work.

Chamberlain's social, political and religious connections among Birmingham's emerging industrial elite drew him into local politics. He was elected to the Town Council in November, 1869. Most of the members of the Council were Radicals in national politics, but they did not translate their Radicalism into a vigorous municipal policy. Before 1873, Birmingham's municipal elections were usually non-partisan. The factions which mattered were an "Economist" group, which had dominated the Council in the late 1850s, and a group of "Reformers" which slowly grew in strength after 1861. Both groups contained Conservatives, though the bulk of both were Liberals--which in Birmingham meant Radicals. There was, however, a difference in the social base of the two groups. Small-scale tradesmen and landlords dominated the Economist group, while the reformers were wealthy businessmen.[5] The Reformers were more willing to spend money than the Economists, but reform was a tendency rather than a program. They had no distinctive municipal reform program until after Chamberlain became Mayor in 1873.

---

[5]Conrad Gill, The History of Birmingham, vol. 1: Manor and Borough to 1865 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 358-61, 425-27. E. P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government (London: Edward Arnold [Publishers] Ltd., 1973), pp. 27, 31-34.

Chamberlain, therefore, belonged to several groups. Economically, he was a wealthy businessman; religiously, a Nonconformist; politically, a Radical and a municipal politician. Together, his roles connected him to much of the English middle class. What the middle class was in late Victorian England and what its relations were to the rest of society, is our next consideration.

ii

The term "middle class" is ambiguous. First of all, "class" is used in a variety of ways. It can mean social stratification, which is determined by objective, measurable, and largely economic criteria.[6] It often includes status, which involves honor and deference, rather than goods.[7] Or, class can be considered as an identification group, in conflict with other identification groups. Such class designations can be assumed by members of the class, or can be assigned by others, or both. In this sense, classes grow up in relationship to each other, rather than independently. Therefore, class involves class consciousness.[8]

---

[6]R. S. Neale, "Class and Class Consciousness in Early Nineteenth Century England: Three Classes or Five?", Victorian Studies 12 (September, 1968):9.

[7]Max Weber, "Class, Status, Party", Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social Stratification, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset (N.Y.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 68-70.

[8]E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (N.Y.: Random House, Vintage Books, 1963), p. 9.

Victorian social thought used a three class model: aristocracy, based upon ownership of land; middle class, based upon ownership of industry; and working class, based upon the sale of labor. But, the model was oversimplified. The middle class was split between those people who derived their income from entrepreneurship and trade, and a smaller but growing group who were professionals or clerks. After 1860, the professional and clerical group grew rapidly, as government expanded and as large scale industry came into the hands of professional managers.[9] Richard Cobden and other middle class leaders had distinguished between "active" entrepreneurial wealth and "passive" aristocratic wealth. But, as the capitalist owner-manager disappeared from large industry, a division appeared in the business class. Those wealthy businessmen who lived off of dividends had little to distinguish them from absentee landlords. The active entreprenurial class was composed of owners of small workshops and stores. The poorest members of this class lived no better than the more secure members of the working class. A similar spectrum and division existed among the professionals and clerks. The term "middle class", therefore, covered a wide range of conditions of life and sources of income.

---

[9]Harold Perkin, The Origin of Modern English Society, 1780-1880 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 252-70, 428-37.

Relations between the middle class and the aristocracy were ambiguous. The social prestige of the aristocracy was enormous, and most members of the middle class copied aristocratic manners and styles, as far as they could afford to do so. But, Nonconformity and Radicalism slowed the process of assimilation. The middle class was the backbone of both movements. Neither Nonconformity nor Radicalism included the entire middle class, but both were stronger among the middle class than in either the working class or aristocracy. Both movements expressed antagonism to the aristocratic domination of society, and both were vehicles for the satisfaction of middle class ambitions. Nonconformist and Radical leaders--often, but not always, the same persons--were the most active exponents of middle class consciousness. They raised most of the contentious issues between the aristocracy and the middle classes. Their combativeness affected party politics. When the Liberal party adopted the Nonconformist or Radical viewpoint, the conflict took place between the parties. When the Liberal leadership did not accept the Radical or Nonconformist program, there was strife between Liberal factions.

There was little overt antagonism between the middle class and the working class in the 1860s. Prosperity took the sting out of the grievances which had fed Chartism, and religion eased many social tensions. The upper sections of the working class copied middle class manners as the middle

class copied the aristocracy. In 1867, Parliament agreed with John Bright's argument that many members of the working class had shown by their behavior that they deserved the franchise. The trade unions, which were Britain's most distinctively working class institutions, represented mainly skilled laborers and pursued a non-revolutionary policy.

In the 1870s, the most politically active members of the working class used their votes to support Radical policies and leaders. Radical politicians like Chamberlain could secure a working class following with little more than verbal endorsement of working class goals. But, working class independence was growing. The first two workingmen's representatives were elected to Parliament in 1874. However, most working class leaders had not yet abandoned their faith in middle class Radicalism.

English society was not fully divided into antagonistic nation-wide classes until the 1890s. Before that horizontal pattern was fully established, elements of an older vertical pattern survived to affect the balance of power in society. One of these forces was localism. During the Industrial Revolution, middle class elites established themselves in most of the larger provincial towns. Local patriotism was strong, and these towns were at the height of their influence in the mid-nineteenth century. Their societies differed sharply from that of London, and they differed from each other. All of the influences on middle

class life came together at the local level. National alignments, including political parties, were only coalitions of local factions which often differed from each other. The last half of the nineteenth century was the golden age of local government, especially in those towns which had sufficient resources to support a vigorous and reforming Town Council.[10]

As yet denied full admission into national politics, many members of the middle class turned to local government in the 1850s,'60s and'70s. It afforded them an outlet for their energies, a sop to their ambition, and a degree of social prestige. But, local government was a complex mechanism, caught between the local community it represented and the central government from which it derived the power to govern.

iii

When Parliament passed the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835, the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, declared that it was a great victory for the Dissenters.[11] The Act

---

[10]Perkin, Origins of Modern English Society, pp. 17-38. Donald Read, The English Provinces c. 1760-1960, A Study in Influence (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1964). John Vincent, The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-1868 (London: Constable, 1966), pp. xv, 82-92. D. C. Moore, "Political Morality in Mid-Nineteenth Century England: Concepts, Norms, Violations", Victorian Studies 13 (September, 1969):5-36.

[11]Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act,

(5 & 6 William 4, ch. 76) threw municipal government into the hands of the urban middle class. It reformed and created a uniform system of government for 178 municipal boroughs in England and Wales. A further forty-six boroughs were chartered under the Act between 1835 and 1870. Over one hundred smaller boroughs were omitted from the reform and not reformed until 1883. Most of the larger boroughs had the same boundaries as the parliamentary borough of the same name, but parliamentary and municipal borough were legally distinct.[12]

In most boroughs, the municipal franchise was broader than the parliamentary franchise. Any adult male, living in the borough or within seven miles of it, and owning or occupying a house or shop rated for relief of the poor for three consecutive years, was eligible to be a Burgess and vote. In practice, the Burgess roll was much smaller than the number of potential voters. Only 3% of the population of Birmingham was on the Burgess roll in 1852. It rose to 8.3% in 1866. After the Municipal Franchise Act of 1869, it rose sharply, and stood at 17.3% in 1873.[13]

---

vols. 2 & 3: The Manor and the Borough (London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1908), 3:750.

[12] ibid., p. 752. Josef Redlich and Francis W. Hirst, Local Government in England, 2 vols. (N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1903), 1:224, 235.

[13] Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, s. 9. The figures for the Birmingham Burgess Roll are calculated from the following returns: Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary

The Burgesses voted in their wards for town Councillors, and no town official was elected by the entire borough. One-third of the Councillors were elected on November 1 of each year to three-year terms. Three Councillors, or a multiple thereof, were assigned to each ward. The Council elected Aldermen, equal in number to one-third of the Councillors, for six-year terms, half of them every three years. The Council elected a Mayor annually, usually from among its members, though this was not required. Town Councils were large. The Birmingham Town Council consisted of forty-eight Councillors (for fourteen wards, two of which had double representation) and sixteen Aldermen; the Birmingham Council always elected one of its members to be Mayor. To be a member of the Council, a Burgess must possess a personal estate worth £1000 (£500 in towns with fewer than four wards) or be rated for poor relief for £30 (£15 in smaller towns). Priests, ministers, and persons who held contracts from the Corporation were forbidden to be Councillors.[14]

The Town Council's powers were vague. Its only obli-

Papers (Commons), 1849 (16), 45:186-87; 1867 (11), 56:363-417; 1867 (136), 56:449-59; 1874 (381), 53:43-58. Brian Keith-Lucas, The English Local Government Franchise: A Short History (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), pp. 97-101.

[14] Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, ss. 9, 25, 28, 30, 31, 39, 40.

a Watch Committee to administer a police force. It had power to appoint and dismiss officers, appoint committees, administer charitable trusts, extend the area of lighting in the borough, and "make such Bye Laws as to them shall seem meet for the good Rule and Government of the Borough".[15]

The Council exercised both legislative and administrative powers. The Mayor had no independent authority; departments took their orders directly from the Council or its committees. The Municipal Corporations Act directed that the Police Department be managed by the Watch Committee, which reported to the Council quarterly. This provision set a precedent for other functions. Committees were set up to supervise each branch of town administration, subject to approval of their actions by the Council. In 1851, Birmingham secured authority to delegate many of its powers to committees, and other towns followed suit. There was no regularity in the committees which each Town Council set up. A Health Committee was mandated in 1875, an Education Committee in 1902, and almost all large and middling boroughs had committees for finance, public works, and general purposes. Where gas and water were supplied by the Corporation, there were committees to supervise them. But, this was the limit of similarity among boroughs. Committees intervened directly in administration, committee members actively

---

[15] Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, ss. 25, 58, 60-68, 70-75, 87, 88, 90.

supervised operations, civil servants were accorded little autonomy, and Councillors occasionally made inspection tours.[16]

The legal status of municipal corporations limited their powers. As a legal person, the Corporation had the power to do anything a living person could do, but this power was insufficient for governmental purposes. In order to condemn land, dig up a street for water mains, levy taxes, or forbid the dumping of sewage in the streets, a municipal corporation needed additional legal authority from Parliament. If it acted without that sanction, it was acting ultra vires--beyond its powers.[17]

The doctrine of ultra vires, which the courts first applied to municipal corporations in the 1850s, reinforced their close dependence upon Parliament. Innovating boroughs proceeded by securing a Local Act. Though Local Acts were juridicially classed with the Public General Acts, they passed through Parliament by a separate procedure reserved for Private and Personal Acts. Between 1800 and 1884, Parliament passed 18,500 Local, Personal and Private Acts,

---

[16]Keith-Lucas, Local Government Franchise, p. 193, n. 4. Redlich and Hirst, English Local Government, 1:302-53. K. B. Smellie, A History of Local Government, 4th ed. (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1968), pp. 94-96.

[17]W. Ivor Jennings, Principles of Local Government Law, 4th ed. (London: University of London Press, 1960), pp. 139-51. Seward Brice, A Treatise on the Doctrine of Ultra Vires (London: Stevens and Haynes, 1874), pp. vii-ix.

almost double the number of Public Acts passed in the same period. Local Acts covered almost every industrial and social movement: enclosures, roads, courts, poor law unions, town improvements, canals, railways, tramways, gas, electricity, and water supply. In all of these fields, Local Acts led the way; they were followed by Public Acts only after many years.[18]

Local Acts were a more important element of constitutional and political relations in a town than were Public Acts. Promotion of a Local Act was a major political event. The Act governed relations between the Corporation and independent bodies which controlled vital town services: gas and water companies, and improvement commissioners. Like the Corporation, these bodies drew their powers from Local Acts. An attempt by either the Council or a rival authority to secure a new Act could produce a bitter contest, locally and before Parliament. Political exploitation of ratepayer apprehensions and legal appeals to the doctrine of ultra vires exacerbated the struggle. Many towns tried to solve the problem by absorbing these rival authorities, and a trend set in to do so in the 1840s. But, the process was slow and was still incomplete in the 1870s.

---

[18]Frederick Clifford, A History of Private Bill Legislation, 2 vols. (London: Butterworths, 1885-87; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), 1:266-67. O. C. Williams, The Historical Development of Private Bill Procedure and Standing Orders in the House of Commons, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1948-49), 1:58-175.

Finance was the most powerful single restriction on municipal activity. The Municipal Corporations Act placed tight financial controls on the boroughs. All money received by the Corporation was to be paid into and out of the Borough Fund, upon which public accounts were to be kept and an annual audit was to be conducted. Payments were to be made only upon order of the Council. If there was a surplus from traditional income and property, the surplus was to be applied to the benefit of the inhabitants and the improvement of the borough. If there was a deficit, the Council was to levy a rate upon the inhabitant. Any sale of Corporation property needed the approval of the Treasury, which could set conditions for that approval.[19]

Only a few of the older municipal corporations possessed enough income from property to avoid levying a rate. Newer Corporations, such as Birmingham, were almost totally dependent upon the rates. The borough did not tax its citizens directly; it served a precept upon parish authorities to do so. The valuation of property was determined by parish authorities, which often produced inequities between parishes in the same borough. The parish levied a rate on the ratepayer's visible estate, valued according to the annual rental value of his property. The occupier of the property was taxed, rather than its owner. Before 1850, residents of

---

[19] Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, ss. 59, 60, 92-94.

tenements and houses of the poor were not generally rated because the costs of collection were too high. But, tenements and lodging houses were taxed after the Small Tenements Rating Act of 1850 allowed the owners to pay their tenants' rates and charge it to their rent. This provision allowed the tenants to vote if they stayed in one place long enough to meet the residence requirement.[20]

Constant grievances arose from inequities in the rating structure. Rental value was an adequate measure of valuation in a rural society where land was the basis of wealth, but annual rental value was a low assessment for a factory or a store. An unfair proportion of the rates fell upon land and houses. Despite the fact that owners were not formally liable for the rates, landowners contended that rates were simply passed on in the form of reduced rents. Most of the increase of taxation in the middle of the nineteenth century fell upon property in towns, to finance the costs of improvement and sanitation. Landlords were one of the main sources of opposition to local expenditure; the Conservative party took up their cause. Radical business-

---

[20]Edwin Cannan, The History of Local Rates in England: Five Lectures (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1896). Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act, vol. 1: The Parish and the County (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1906), p. 15. E. P. Hennock, "Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900", Historical Journal 6 (1963):216. J. T. Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, 2 vols. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1878-84), 2:50-57, shows variations in the incidence of rating among the three parishes of Birmingham.

men like Chamberlain were less affected by climbing rates. The landlords were their political enemies, and Radicals wished to make owners formally liable for half of the rates.[21]

Despite general dissatisfaction with the rating system, it remained essentially unchanged throughout the nineteenth century as the basis of local finance. Rates were easy to levy and collect, and no single alternative had a considerable body of supporters.

In the last half of the nineteenth century, the central government slowly increased its financial support of local government. In 1839, the Education Committee of the Privy Council inaugurated a system of grants-in-aid to schools as a mechanism for raising educational standards. In 1856, the Home Office took up the technique by paying one-fourth of the cost of police pay and uniforms, provided the police force was up to the standards of Home Office inspectors. Few towns failed to apply. In 1865, grants in aid were extended to metropolitan fire brigades, in 1867 to vaccinations, and in 1870 to the new Boards of Education. When the system was reformed in 1888, total grants-in-aid amounted to over £4 million, some 13.6% of local revenues. In the same period, the Treasury assumed £2.7 million of local expenditure. All grants were for specific functions, with inspectors exacting

---

[21] Hennock, "Finance and Politics", Historical Journal, pp. 214-16. G. J. Goschen, Reports and Speeches on Local Taxation (London: Macmillan and Company, 1872), pp. 17-25.

performance according to central government standards. Occasionally, one of the larger towns would refuse a grant in the name of local autonomy, but such actions were rare and were usually reversed within a few years.[22]

National movements affected local government. The sanitary reform movement, launched by Edwin Chadwick in 1842, extended the powers of local authorities. The Public Health Act of 1848 authorized the creation of local Boards of Health with extensive sanitary powers. Most municipal corporations became their own Boards of Health. Though a reaction unseated Chadwick in 1854, and destroyed the General Board of Health four years later, the movement grew rapidly at the local level. In the ten years from 1848 to 1858, the General Board of Health authorized £2,956,178 of loans for sanitary construction, while its successor, the Local Government Act Office, authorized £7,363,366 of loans in its thirteen year existence.[23]

---

[22]Royston J. Lambert, "Central and Local Relations in Mid-Victorian England: The Local Government Act Office, 1858-1871", Victorian Studies 6 (1962-63):126-28, 132-38. Jennifer M. Hart, "The County and Borough Police Act, 1856", Public Administration 33 (winter, 1956):408-13. Henry Parris, Constitutional Bureaucracy: The Development of British Central Administration Since the Eighteenth Century (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1969), pp. 230-40. Maureen Schulz, "The Development of the Grant System", Essays in Local Government, ed. Charles H. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948), pp. 115-17. In 1873, Birmingham refused a grant to pay the salary of the gaol surgeon, but the action was reversed later in the year. Proceedings of the Birmingham Council, February 4, 1873, no. 8612, October 28, 1873, no. 9049.

[23]"First Report of the Local Government Board", Great

By 1870, the sanitary movement achieved something close to consensus. Sanitary legislation was easy to obtain, loans were readily given for sanitary construction, and sanitary reform was easy to justify at the polls. If some towns, such as Birmingham, lagged slightly behind others in this field, it only made a municipal reform movement easier to fashion. When Joseph Chamberlain led Birmingham into reform after 1873, he was able to take paths which had been thoroughly tried in other towns.

The Royal Commission on the Sanitary Laws (1867-71) recommended the consolidation of public health legislation and administration. Because the largest part of local powers related to sanitation, the Commission's recommendations amounted to an overhaul of local government. All national health powers were to be concentrated in one central agency, while the country was to be covered by a network of about eight hundred sanitary districts, each governed by a board which would be the sole public health authority in that district.[24]

The Government acted upon the Commission's recommendations. In 1871, the Poor Law Board, the Local Government Act Office and the Medical Officer of the Privy Council were

---

Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1872 [c. 516], 28:xliii-xliv.

[24]"Second Report of the Royal Commission on the Sanitary Laws", Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1871 [c. 281], 35:174-77.

consolidated into the Local Government Board, administered by a member of the Cabinet. The Public Health Act of 1872 regularized the local administration of public health. England was divided into urban and rural sanitary districts. Urban districts were governed by the Town Council in boroughs, improvement commisioners in an Improvement Act district, or a local board in any specially constituted local government district. Those parts of Poor Law unions outside of the urban sanitary districts were to be rural sanitary districts, with the Poor Law Guardians as the rural sanitary authority. The Public Health Act of 1875 consolidated all previous public health legislation into an overall code.[25]

The public health Acts completed the structure of municipal government and provided a basis for its extension to the rural areas. In 1875, the municipal corporations and the sanitary districts were the only modern and reasonably uniform element of English local government. Despite its limitations, municipal government proved well suited to urban social structures. But, rural government successfully resisted reform for a generation after the towns had submitted to it. There, a different social structure prevailed, and localism represented a different equation. Reform could not be delayed forever, however. In the early 1870s,

---

[25]Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc., Local Government Board Act, 1871, 34 & 35 Victoria, ch. 70, Public Health Act, 1872, 35 & 36 Victoria, ch. 79, Public Health Act, 1875, 38 & 39 Victoria, ch. 55.

Parliament faced increasing demands for reform of the counties.

iv

The reform of county government raised problems of the relationship between local government and localism. The debate over the structure of county government could--and did--easily diverge into questions of control. In the 1870s, the landed class dominated county government. The fifty-six counties of England and Wales were ruled by the Justices of the Peace, who were royal officials appointed from among the local aristocracy. The Justices, who met every three months in Quarter Sessions, had adapted well to the new administrative demands imposed upon them. County governments were generally honest and efficient. However, after the Reform Act of 1867, the Justices were criticized for the undemocratic nature of their rule. It was felt to be especially a grievance because they levied taxes. All reform proposals centered on dividing the Justices' administrative powers from their judicial ones, and placing the former in the hands of an elected board. Beyond this basic agreement, a host of details remained to be settled.

Some Radicals looked beyond the reform of county government to restructuring the chaotic system below it. They fastened upon the new system of sanitary districts, which neatly separated urban from rural areas, and which already

had local boards exercising the most important functions of local government. They contemplated a reform which would give to the sanitary authority the powers of other ad hoc local authorities, such as burial boards, Poor Law Guardians, public libraries boards, baths and washhouses boards, and school boards. In this way, they could create a comprehensive district system.

Below the districts and municipal corporations was a patchwork of about 15,000 parishes and townships. In the 1870s, the parishes were generally excluded from proposals for local government reform. Since losing their Poor Law powers in 1834, the parish Vestries had been systematically looted of their functions. In most areas, the parish survived principally as a taxation district. In 1871, George J. Goschen, the President of the Poor Law Board, introduced a bill to make the parish the basis of a reformed local government system. A financial expert, he did so to simplify the local taxation system, and the bill gave the parochial council only taxing powers.[26] Even this was too much for his critics, for the parishes had a bad reputation. He withdrew the bill. Parish reform was not practical politics until 1885, when Chamberlain's friend and ally, Sir Charles Dilke, inserted it into the Liberal election program.

---

[26]Goschen, Reports and Speeches on Local Taxation, pp. 209-10.

The overwhelming fact of local government reform in the late nineteenth century was the power of the municipal model. Provisions for rural local government bills were always discussed in terms of current practices in the towns. All parties assumed that the new rural system would resemble the existing municipal one in greater or lesser degree. The distinction between municipal reform and local government reform, though sharp legally, was hazy in practice.

As local government was such a complex web of legalisms and practices, the struggle between localisms took place over technical issues. Rural government reform was debated in the Cabinet for a decade before it reached Parliament. The debate centered on representation, powers, hierarchies of councils, and other matters of detail. But, the issue was power: rural leaders versus urban ones, and the result was determined by the condition of their larger relationship. Even such a supposedly neutral issue could not be separated from the social politics of the age.

C H A P T E R I I

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN'S LOCALISM

We have already defined localism as a force which encompasses local government, local politics and local economic and social relations. We have also noted that it was a force in national politics in nineteenth century Britain, both as a source of political coalitions and as a philosophy for the extension of government activity. But, each person or group related the different elements of localism to each other in a unique manner. In this chapter, we shall analyze Joseph Chamberlain's localism. In so doing, we will treat his views as unitary, though he expressed them over the period of a quarter of a century. This approach is possible because Chamberlain held rigidly to most of his basic political prescriptions. He not only took similar positions in the 1870s and the 1890s, he used virtually the same words to justify them. In the few cases where he altered his position on an issue, we will note the variations.

The center of our discussion of localism is Chamberlain's attitude toward local government, for it demonstrates all of the attitudes and positions which made up the larger whole. Chamberlain's system can be analyzed in several parts: local government as an economic institution, its

efficiency, its control, and the relation of localism to national politics. We shall take each in turn.

i

Chamberlain viewed local government as an economic institution. He often compared it to a business enterprise:

> The leading idea of the English system may be said to be that of a joint-stock or co-operative enterprise in which every citizen is a shareholder, and of which the dividends are receivable in the improved health and the increase in the comfort and happiness of the community. The members of the Council are the directors of this great business, and their fees consist in the confidence, the consideration, and the gratitude of those amongst whom they live. In no other undertaking, whether philanthropic or commercial, are the returns more speedy, more manifest, or more beneficial.[1]

To him, the comparison was more than a metaphor. He felt that local government was a particular type of business enterprise, with special functions and responsibilities, but operating according to economic rules which governed all business concerns. In businessman's language, local government was a trustee for the entire community. It focused community effort, administered certain functions for public benefit, and provided to all classes privileges and conveniences otherwise reserved to the rich.[2] As a

---

[1]Joseph Chamberlain, "Municipal Institutions in America and England", The Forum (Philadelphia), 14 (November, 1892): 280. See also London Municipal Life: A Speech by the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., February 6, 1895 (London: London Municipal Society, 1895), p. 6.

[2]Joseph Chamberlain, "Municipal Government--Past, Present

businessman, Chamberlain fully appreciated the potentialities of a well-run local government enterprise.

In common with other reformers, Chamberlain was attracted to the ability of government to achieve results by command. Government had distinct advantages over private enterprise and philanthropy, which was the accepted alternative approach to social problems in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead of relying on uncertain contributions, government could command resources through taxation. Through law, it could command obedience, rather than use persuasion. Compulsory purchase could overcome obstructive private rights. And, as a popular agency, government could give extended consideration to social costs and benefits.

Chamberlain wanted to expand the scope of municipal activity, and he proposed that local authorities make vigorous use of the powers they already possessed. He wanted to draw the line between government and business farther into the private sector than most of his contemporaries did. He recommended two approaches to local government expansion: municipalization and improvement. They were the core of his program as Mayor of Birmingham, and all of his subsequent proposals for local government were extensions of one or the other.

Municipalization was the purchase of private utilities

---

and Future", The New Review 10 (June, 1894):656.

--particularly gas and water companies--by local government. Its purpose was to unify local services by placing them in the hands of representative authorities and to improve their efficiency.

While Chamberlain was Mayor of Birmingham, the Town Council purchased the town's two gas companies and one water company. He justified the purchases as reasonable extensions of municipal services. Water supply was vital to public health. At the time the Corporation purchased the Birmingham Waterworks Company, the town's wells were polluted and the company faced a search for new sources of water. Chamberlain argued that essential municipal services should not be a source of profit to private individuals. While the Town Council received a profit of £25,000 per annum from its gas operations, water company profits went solely to reduce the price of water.[3]

Chamberlain also appreciated the organizational advantages of local government control. By unifying the town's two gas companies, the Corporation of Birmingham was able to eliminate duplication in works and staff, and achieve

---

[3]Borough of Birmingham, A Short History of the Passing of the Birmingham (Corporation) Gas Act and the Birmingham (Corporation) Water Act, with the Speeches of the Mayor (Joseph Chamberlain, Esq.) in Support of these Measures, and also in Favour of the Adoption of the Artizans' and Labourers Dwellings' Improvement Act (Birmingham: General Purposes Committee, 1875), pp. 56-59. John Thackray Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, 2 vols. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1878-1884), 2:413.

economies of scale. Political unity had economic effects: the companies no longer faced a hostile town council in approaching Parliament for powers. The Corporation could expand services more cheaply than could the private companies; it did not have to pay a dividend, and it could borrow money at three percent rather than five percent. Thus, Chamberlain felt municipal operation of utilities to be superior to private operation. The Town Council, close to the people, was sensitive to public needs. It did not have to reconcile public demands with those of private investors. Its democratic nature made it more efficient.

Chamberlain was prepared to severely limit private enterprise within the public sphere. In 1882, as President of the Board of Trade, he carried an Electric Lighting Act, which assured municipalities extensive powers over electric lighting. Electricity was an experimental medium in the 1880s, so the Act allowed a town council to supply electricity itself, or to license a private company to take the risks. If it chose to allow private exploitation, the Council retained veto power over all licenses granted within its jurisdiction. The law restricted the rights of licensed companies; they were held to strict standards of performance, and the municipality had the power of compulsory purchase on easy terms after twenty-one years.[4]

---

[4]Chamberlain originally proposed seven years. Elsie E. Gulley, Joseph Chamberlain and English Social Politics (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1926), pp. 158-59.

Chamberlain's other approach to municipal extension was called improvement. Improvement was a technical term in the vocabulary of local government, describing construction which upgraded the town's services: streets, drainage, lighting, water supply, and sanitation. Chamberlain wanted to use improvement to intervene temporarily to correct some evil or abuse, such as slum housing or poor conditions for public health. Improvement involved greater difficulties than municipalization. Chamberlain applied it to many of the leading social issues which arose during his career, but all of his proposals bear a family resemblance, especially in technical details, to the Birmingham Improvement Scheme.

The Improvement Scheme was justified as a sanitary measure under the Artizans' Dwellings Act of 1875. Chamberlain proposed that the Corporation of Birmingham purchase and demolish a slum area near the town's center. He linked this sanitary district to an improvement district for upgrading and expanding the adjacent business district. To the Council, Chamberlain drew a picture of "a street as broad as a Parisian boulevard from New Street [in the business district] to Aston Road [at the far end of the sanitary district]" without the cost of a local act. The scheme justified this street, later named Corporation Street, as an approach to the sanitary district; it would provide ventilation and raise property values in the sanitary area. By linking the districts in one scheme, Chamberlain over-

came ratepayer opposition which might have blocked either portion of the scheme.[5]

The improvement district was vital to the financial success of the entire scheme. The Council began reconstruction at New Street, where the most valuable property was located. Opponents charged that the sanitary district was being ignored, but Chamberlain and the Council refused to demolish the entire district at once, as it would overtax the town's construction industry and depress land values if all sites came on the market at once. Expenses could be kept down only if the Council received income from old buildings still standing while phasing in income from new sites. The Council deliberately let out new sites slowly to avoid depressing rents. The scheme faced financial difficulties in the depression of the 1870s and 1880s. The market for new sites was poor, and the scheme did not return a profit until the 1890s. In the mid-1880s, the interest on the Improvement Scheme's debt cost the Council £20,000 a year. Nonetheless, the diversity of the scheme and its promoters' shrewdness in negotiations with property owners made the scheme one of the few to survive the depression

---

[5]Borough of Birmingham, Short History, pp. 81-85. Testimony of Joseph Chamberlain, June 17, 1884, "Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes", Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons) 1884-85, 30:444-45, q. 12,370.

intact.[6]

Chamberlain's success with municipalization and improvement encouraged him to apply them as solutions to other social problems. The two approaches also had other benefits which encouraged him to recommend them. They fit in closely to his social and economic views and reinforced the kind of social politics he wished to pursue. For Chamberlain, local government was closely integrated with the business system.

ii

Efficiency was the criterion which Chamberlain used to separate public from private enterprise. He rejected the modern political habit which allows government to intervene in the economy, but loads it with so many limitations that it must operate uneconomically and inefficiently. He did not consider local government enterprise inherently inefficient, provided it had the same freedom to act as private enterprise. He wanted public and private enterprise clearly defined and separated. Local authorities had the right to

---

[6]Birmingham Liberal Association, Rotton Park Ward, The Improvement Scheme and the Coming Elections: A Speech by Councillor R. Tangye, August 25, 1879 (Birmingham, 1879). "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 451, q. 12,436, p. 459, q. 12,587, p. 460, q. 12,512. Asa Briggs, History of Birmingham, vol. 2: Borough and City, 1865-1938 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 80-83. E. P. Hennock, "Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900", Historical Journal 6 (1963):223.

be "supreme within their special jurisdiction", and private enterprise existed within the public area on sufferance. But, public jurisdiction was limited to matters which "the community can do better than the private individual" because of their magnitude, necessity of concerted action, or interference with private rights. He insisted that local government must adhere to certain rules in order to maintain the efficiency which was its charter to enter the economy.[7]

Chamberlain considered the individual responsibility of Councillors to be the pivotal element of both popular control and efficiency in local government. In this quality, it was superior both to private enterprise and national government. Local authorities could avoid pitfalls through the Councillors' intimate knowledge of their localities, and a local bureaucracy small enough to be managed. His prescription was tailored to the English municipal constitution. Town councils were large: Birmingham had sixty-four council members, Manchester had seventy-two, Liverpool had eighty. Through the committee system, Councillors exercised detailed daily control over administration. Chamberlian praised the English local government civil service, but warned against "a too great extension of officialism." His projects of municipalization and improvement

---

[7]Borough of Birmingham, Short History, p. 9. Chamberlain, "Municipal Government", New Review, p. 658.

were to be conceived and executed by Councillors on their own responsibility and judgement. The large size of the Council made them close to their constituents and secured the popular control which made the system work.[8]

Despite his activism, Chamberlain felt that Councils should not get too far ahead of their constituents. Legislation in advance of popular sentiment would fail. Progress must be real and secure, backed by public sentiment. The only way to accomplish this was by "gradually increasing [local government's] functions and responsiblities and so raising its tone." Through increased responsibilities, Councillors would gain a greater appreciation of "the dignity and importance of municipal work." Even such features as municipal titles and regalia would increase public interest and attention. The result would be a municipal patriotism animating the entire locality, making local government a truly popular and efficient institution. Birmingham had achieved this state of grace. He recommended that his town be emulated by other localities, and even held it up as a standard for the British Parliament.[9]

---

[8]"Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 454, q. 12,491-92. Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, pp. 8-13. Chamberlain, "Municipal Government", New Review, p. 655.

[9]Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, January 13, 1877, January 23, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/151, 480. Joseph Chamberlain to the Birmingham Town Council, November 9, 1876, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, ed. Charles W. Boyd, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 1:71.

Chamberlain's localism was limited to communities no larger than Birmingham. He felt that the advantages of local government would disappear as a city grew beyond its optimum size. No more than half a million people, he said, could be efficiently administered from one center. Above that size, Councillors would lose their detailed personal knowledge of the district, and their close relationship with their constituents.[10]

Chamberlain was sensitive to the legal and financial details that underpinned local government economy, which he considered to be at the root of its efficiency. Where most businessmen saw local government as a source of unprofitable expenditure and irritating taxation, he emphasised its usefulness as an agency for social investment, paying dividends in health, happiness, prosperity, comfort, and intellegence of the community. He insisted that the national government recognize the consequences of its social legislation. Much of the activity of local authorities involved the execution of national Acts, such as the Sanitary Acts, and they had a right to expect Parliamentary support in the form of Exchequer loans. Indebtedness was an invest-

---

Joseph Chamberlain, "Memorandum on London Government", December 21, 1881, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/2/8/5, also Public Record Office, CAB 37/7/1, pp. 1-3. Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, pp. 4-5.

[10]Chamberlain, "Municipal Government", New Review, p. 656. Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, pp. 10-13. "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 454, qq. 12,491-92.

ment for the community, often paying a handsome financial return. The capital projects upon which the money was spent made the money among the most secure in the kingdom, and Chamberlain did not see why local authorities should have to pay off their debt at all. The greater security of their loans allowed local authorities to obtain a lower rate of interest than private businesses. That leverage, economies of scale, and the unification of local services, enabled the municipality to employ resources more efficiently than could a private concern.[11]

In Chamberlain's view, local government enterprise should be allowed unfettered operation within its proper sphere. But, efforts to benefit individuals at public expense raised the cost of municipal enterprise. Chamberlain felt this was the major difficulty facing local authorities in their efforts to solve social problems. Especially, the local authority should not be put at a financial disadvantage when it took land by compulsion. It should pay only a price which a willing seller might obtain from a willing purchaser on the open market, with no allowance for compulsory purchase or prospective value. He was aware of the difficulties of arbitration, especially where disturbance of business was involved, but he held to his position

---

[11] 3 Hansard 249:622-23 (August 9, 1879). 3 Hansard 233:1726-27 (April 23, 1877). Borough of Birmingham, Short History, pp. 13-14. Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, p. 22.

that fair value should be paid and nothing more.[12]

To Chamberlain, the success of local government depended upon a sense of its proper limits. He drew a sharp line between the powers he considered necessary for local government to function effectively and the sphere of private enterprise. Local government, he felt, should confine itself to administration of services for the entire population and temporary interventions, such as improvement. Especially, "all monopolies which are sustained in any way by the State ought to be in the hands of the representatives of the people." [13] But, the municipality should not undertake projects which would bring it into competition with legitimate private enterprise. Public invasion of the private sphere would be wrong, expensive and unsuccessful. Whereas public enterprise was more efficient than private enterprise in its own sphere, it was less so outside of it. It would only disrupt private enterprise, and fail to attain its object.

---

[12] "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 448, q. 12,413, p. 454, q. 12,482, p. 460, q. 12,605. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, November 21, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, f. 83. Joseph Chamberlain to Henry Broadhurst, August 28, 1883, quoted in Neal Kunze, "English Working Class Housing: A Problem of Social Control", Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971, p. 63. Joseph Chamberlain, "Labourers' and Artizans' Dwellings", Fortnightly Review, N.S., 34 (December, 1883): 767. Joseph Chamberlain to William Dwyer Gray, December 8, 1884, Chamberlain Papers, JC 8/6/31/5. "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, pp. 453-54, qq. 12,477-84, p. 459, qq. 12,588-89a.

[13] Borough of Birmingham, Short History, p. 9.

Chamberlain's housing proposals illustrate how sharply he drew the line between public and private enterprise. When the housing issue arose in the 1880s, he recommended improvement schemes as a solution. His opponents immediately pointed out that the Birmingham Town Council had built no artizans' dwellings in the nine years of the Improvement Scheme, despite the fact that over five hundred dwellings had been demolished in the sanitary district. Chamberlain replied that none were needed, and rejected the notion of public building projects. He proposed to allow local authorities to demolish old buildings, but private contractors were to construct new ones. If local government entered the construction market, "they would so much disturb the market that they would stop the supply". Builders, afraid of the competition, would stop building working class housing voluntarily. Though Chamberlain favored a mixed economy, he did so to preserve and strengthen the basic market system. Local government enterprise was to enter the market as one among many types of enterprise. It would supply services or attack social problems insoluble by private means.[14]

---

[14] J. M. Brindley, The Homes of the Working Classes and the Promises of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P. (Westminister: National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, 1884). "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 447, q. 12,398, p. 453, q. 12,465-71, p. 460, q. 12,614. During the controversy over London housing in 1884, Chamberlain made a temporary exception in favor of London, because of its greater size and property values. But, he abandoned the exception in the 1890s. "Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 459,

iii

Control was at the root of Chamberlain's localism. He had confidence in local government because he felt it would be run by his own kind of people--wealthy businessmen interested in politics. They would form local political elites, each in firm control of a working class following. Behind these local elites stood the national state, run by a coalition of such elites, and in control of the sanctions which supported their rule. The political and social systems which Chamberlain manipulated to assure the control of local government related local government intimately to the other elements of localism.

Chamberlain discussed local government in a combination of democratic and business vocabulary. To underpin its legitimacy, he advocated that local government be elected on the widest possible franchise. Its peculiar excellence, he said, was to be close to the electors and able to respond to their needs. As a democratic institution, local government was "the best political education for a free people". It allowed men who would never be able to enter national government to distinguish themselves in local government, and make decisions about a thousand details of their fellow citizens' daily lives.[15]

---

qq. 12,601-02. Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, pp. 17-22.

[15] 3 Hansard 238:908-13 (March 7, 1878). Chamberlain, "Municipal Institutions", The Forum, pp. 267-68. Chamber-

Despite its popular justification, Chamberlain's system of local elites rested on aristocratic notions which were rapidly becoming outmoded in the 1880s. Councillors, he held, were to be men of wealth and leisure, taking up public service for the best of motives:

> If he is ambitious, what nobler position can he hope to fill than that of the first citizen of this great community? If he is a philanthropist, where else can he expect to be influential in saving the lives of thousands of persons and in bringing health to tens of thousands of homes?[16]

An active municipal program would reflexively justify domination by businessmen, for who else was qualified to administer such schemes? Like any aristocracy, Chamberlain felt that business elites held their rule by superior training and ability. Without their participation, local government would decline into inefficiency and corruption. He had no sympathy with businessmen who complained of rising rates while refusing to participate. If businessmen would have the local government they wanted, they must enter the political arena and recruit a following.[17]

---

lain, "Municipal Government", New Review, p. 656.

[16]Chamberlain to the Birmingham Town Council, November 9, 1876, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:71.

[17]ibid. Joseph Chamberlain to Villiers Blakemore, September 24, 1869, Chamberlain Papers, JC 26/9. In Birmingham and other towns, businessmen were attracted to the gas and water committees, which offered the best opportunity to use their business skills. Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (New York: Harper & Row, 1963; Colophon Books edition, 1970), p. 223.

Without followers, businessmen could not be political leaders. Chamberlain was contemptuous of middle class people who took refuge in negative conservatism. He felt that it could only lead to open class warfare and working class victory. He favored appeasement:

> if they are uneasy or discontented, we have to seek with them as well as for them the causes and remedy of their dissatisfaction. In this way it may be easy to deserve and win their confidence, and thus to influence them to a wise and moderate use of power which cannot possibly be withheld.[18]

During his career as a Radical, Chamberlain sought to gain working class backing, to institutionalize it, and to focus it in pursuit of his own goals. He exaggerated the danger of revolution for these ends, but he may not have been entirely free of apprehension himself. During one of the interminable Cabinet debates over domestic policy, he wrote an exasperated note to Dilke: "This is worse than Egypt. Except you and me, the rest of the Cabinet are helplessly drifting into Revolution." [19] He de-emphasised class legislation, speaking constantly of the general interests of the community in an outdated vocabulary of natural rights. He treated working class demands as isolated grievances, to

---

[18]Joseph Chamberlain, "The Liberal Party and Its Leaders", Fortnightly Review, N.S. 20 (September, 1873):295. See also, Joseph Chamberlain, "The Next Page of the Liberal Programme", Fortnightly Review, N.S. 22 (October, 1874):405, 415-16.

[19]Note in Chamberlain's handwriting, undated, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43887, f. 153.

be settled within the system:

> We may make it clear that equal justice and impartial legislation are to be attained through the usual channels of a free and orderly national life; and anarchy and revolution will be impossible when all just claims are satisfied by ordinary constitutional processes.[20]

Local government was one agency for solving these problems. It could only succeed if its leaders remained "in close sympathy and relationship with the mass of people." [21]

The Birmingham Liberal Association institutionalized that relationship. Through it, the Birmingham business elite mobilized their personal and social power to dominate local politics. They supplied the Association's funds and staffed its upper levels, while artizans staffed the lower levels. Through its ward organization, the Association mobilized voter support, while periodic meetings and publicity kept interest high among committed party workers. The Association's leaders took an active role in community affairs, led in contributing to charities, and had a claque to constantly praise their services to the town.[22]

Three quarters of the members of the Birmingham Six Hundred belonged to the working class.[23] Their presence

---

[20]Chamberlain, "The Liberal Party and Its Leaders", Fortnightly Review, p. 295.

[21]Joseph Chamberlain to the Birmingham Town Council, November 9, 1876, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:71.

[22]A Birmingham Tory, "The Local Working of the Birmingham Caucus", National Review, 6 (November, 1885):360-65.

[23]Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, November 25, 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/134.

showed the success of Chamberlain's policy of actively seeking working class support. The Liberal Association's dominance of town politics relied on a longstanding alliance between Birmingham's Radical businessmen and its artizans. Even before the Liberal Association entered municipal elections, Birmingham Liberals outnumbered Conservatives by a ratio of three-to-two. The Liberal Association simply organized these Liberals and discouraged opposition.[24]

Chamberlain argued that the caucus was a voluntary association of the majority to implement its own program. It could not create majorities where they did not exist, he contended, and it expressed opinion rather than made it. Instead of being an oligarchy, "The aim of the caucus is essentially democratic: it is to provide for the full and efficient representation of the will of the majority, and for its definite expression in the government of the people."[25] But, Chamberlain distorted the term majority out of recognition. He assumed that there was a true majority opinion on every issue, and that the leaders of the majority never became part of the minority. His argument was a poor copy of Rousseau: he substituted "will of the majority" for "will of the people". He used majority to designate a system rather than the people who made it up. However, his claim

---

[24]Trygve R. Tholfsen, "The Origins of the Birmingham Caucus", The Historical Journal 2 (1959):161-84.

[25]Joseph Chamberlain, "The Caucus", Fortnightly Review, N.S., 30 (November, 1878):724.

to represent the majority was necessary to the legitimacy of his system.

Chamberlain recommended the Birmingham Liberal Association to all towns as the model for political organization. The political and social requirements of the caucus structure reinforced his concern for the size of municipalities. The social dominance of the business class which underpinned his method of political control depended upon the personal prominence of the Association's leaders. Above his limit of 500,000 people, that prominence disappeared. His entire political system depended upon this type of control of local institutions. It guaranteed the efficiency and probity of local government, which implemented his programs. As such, it was the building block of a national system.

iv

Chamberlain pursued his local goals within a national framework. His system of local elites presupposed some structure to link them together. Of course, local governments were linked administratively through the national government, but this was unsatisfactory to Chamberlain. The aristocracy was still the most powerful voice in national politics; Radicals and Nonconformists were a small minority. Radicals did not become a majority of the parliamentary Liberal party until after Chamberlain left it in 1886. Chamberlain was

looking for a political structure to focus the power of Britain's urban elites and give them control of the state.[26]

For nine years, his mechanism for doing this was the National Liberal Federation. Founded in Birmingham in 1877, the Federation linked together the urban Liberal Associations under Birmingham leadership. The Federation advanced no programs; the only requirement for membership was that a local Liberal Association be organized on a democratic basis. But, the representatives of other provincial towns were often less concerned to increase their national influence than to prevent Birmingham domination of their politics. The Federation, therefore, was more of a platform for Birmingham's elite to advance their goals nationally than it was any genuine coalition of elites.[27]

If Chamberlain misjudged the political temper in other large provincial towns, he encountered greater problems when he attempted to extend his system beyond them. Difficulties showed up most clearly in London, Ireland and the rural areas.

During the 1870s and 1880s, London was the only British

---

[26] T. W. Heyck, The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), shows the growth of Radical strength, pp. 154, 237-65.

[27] Proceedings Attending the Formation of the National Federation of Liberal Associations; with Report of Conference Held in Birmingham on Thursday, May 31st, 1877 (Birmingham: The "Journal" Printing Offices, 1877). The National Liberal Federation: Its General Objects and Immediate Work (Birmingham: National Liberal Federation, 1880).

city significantly above his limit of 500,000 population for a viable local government. He was consistently hostile to a unitary municipality for London: "the essence and virtue of local government is that it should be local, and it is ridiculous to use the word in reference to a nation of five millions of people." Instead, he proposed to elevate the Metropolitan Vestries to municipal status. As foci of municipal patriotism, the new metropolitan boroughs would concentrate local energy and produce an active program. Chamberlain's proposals were implemented in the London Government Act of 1899. The result was, in the words of critics, "twenty-nine Birminghams instead of one London." [28]

In Ireland, the political organizing skill of the Nationalists attracted his attention. Local autonomy might take the steam out of the Nationalist movement. In 1885, he proposed a scheme for County Councils and a Central Board in Ireland. He openly admitted that his purpose was to divert the Nationalist leadership with the opportunities of local power.[29] Once discontent had been dampened with responsibility, the Nationalists would become a manageable local

---

[28]Chamberlain, London Municipal Life, pp. 4-5, 12. Chamberlain, "Memorandum on London Government", Public Record Office, pp. 1-3. K. B. Smellie, A History of Local Government, 4th ed. (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 152.

[29]Joseph Chamberlain at Swansea, February 1, 1883, quoted in Stephen Gwynn and G. M. Tugwell, The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1917), 1:516. Joseph Chamberlain, "Memorandum on Local Government in Ireland", April 25, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 8/5/1/12.

elite and enter his coalition.

In the English countryside, Chamberlain found no comparable local elite to be his ally. The Counties were dominated by landlords and farmers, both hostile to Chamberlainite Radicalism. Favoring the agricultural laborers, Chamberlain refused to support representative local government in the Counties until the franchise was extended.[30] Though he sought no institutional subordination of rural areas to urban elites, Chamberlain hoped to supply the political leadership of the countryside from the cities, thus reinforcing his coalition.

In the early 1880s, Chamberlain supported land reform. Chamberlain and his associate Jesse Collings (who became closely identified with the issue) rejected proposals for land nationalization, and concentrated on using government purchasing power to create a class of peasant proprietors. Their plan resembled the Birmingham Improvement Scheme in its technical details. Local governments would be given power to take agricultural land by compulsion, paying only fair market value. They could then sell small holdings to agricultural laborers with a three percent mortgage, making them independent yeoman farmers.[31] The object of the plan

---

[30] 3 Hansard 238:908-13 (March 7, 1878).

[31] David Aronson, "Jesse Collings, Agrarian Radical, 1880-1892", Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, 1975, pp. 62-73.

was independence: the state was to intervene to change the social and economic balance in the countryside, but after that it was to withdraw. Continuing state commitment, an important element of twentieth century programs, was missing. After achieving a new balance, the market was to be left alone. Accordingly, the project must pay for itself. The state would loan money on favorable terms, but it would not give any away. Ultimately, the yeoman would pay for his own land. The program was to be administered by local authorities, though the Exchequer would float the mortgage. From the beginning, Collings was bedevilled with local agencies obstructing his Acts, but neither he nor Chamberlain questioned the necessity for local administration.

Chamberlain's localism had its limits. He never challenged the strict subordination of English local government to national government. As in the case of public and private enterprise, he assumed that the line between national and local power could be drawn clearly and sharply. He insisted on the supremacy of Parliament and national institutions, and never questioned the doctrine of ultra vires. He expected Parliament to uphold the authority and dignity of local government, legislate in its favor, and supply administrative, financial, and legal support for its efforts. He opposed state expansion at local government's expense. In 1877, he attacked the transfer of prisons from municipal to central control as "a distinct slur on local government and

management", despite the financial advantages. But, he had no compunction about extending central power if it would aid local government against private monopolies. His Electric Lighting Act of 1882 gave the Board of Trade extensive power to make rules for granting licenses. Only a year later, a Parliamentary committee was disturbed at the Board's vigorous use of these powers.[32]

Irish Nationalism most thoroughly tested Chamberlain's conception of the limits of localism. He refused to go beyond a narrow and rigid conception of central-local relations. His proposed Irish Central Board was explicitly not a parliament. It was burdened with the host of restrictions which limited English local government. All efforts to win Chamberlain to Home Rule foundered on his feeling that there was nothing "between my scheme of National Councils and absolute separation." [33] When Gladstone sought Cabinet support for his Home Rule bill, Chamberlain drew out the legal status of the proposed Irish Parliament. His questions defined the legal limits of English local government.[34]

---

[32] 3 Hansard, 232:436-38 (February 15, 1877). Frederick Clifford, A History of Private Bill Legislation, 2 vols. (London: Butterworth's, 1885-87; reprint ed. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), 1:237-40, 243.

[33] Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, December 24, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/669.

[34] Chamberlain's questions were: 1) Whether the Irish representation was to cease at Westminister? 2) Whether the power of taxation, including customs and excise, was to be given to the Irish Parliament? 3) Whether the appoint-

Convinced by Gladstone's replies that the Irish Parliament was unlike any English local authority, Chamberlain resigned and went into opposition. He was willing to moderate his scheme of Councils and extend broad powers to Irish councils and provincial legislatures, but real sovereign power was something else. He would grant the autonomy enjoyed by Birmingham, but no more than that.[35]

v

The remaining chapters of this dissertation will consider, in a chronological framework, the relationship of Chamberlain's localism to his social politics. That relationship rested on the factors which we have discussed in this chapter: local government as an economic institution, the criterion of efficiency, control, and the relationship of his localism to national politics.

Chamberlain's concern for local government was, at bottom, social. The Birmingham business elite dominated the

---

ment of the judges and the magistracy was to vest in the Irish authority? 4) Whether the Irish Parliament was to have authority in every matter not specially excluded by the Act constituting it or whether it was only to have authority in matters specially delegated to it by statute? Gladstone answered yes to the first three questions and specified the first alternative in question four, the exact opposite of English practice. Joseph Chamberlain, A Political Memoir, 1880-1892, ed. C. H. D. Howard (London: Batchwood Press, 1953), pp. 198-99.

[35]Joseph Chamberlain, "Memorandum on Ireland", March, 1886, Chamberlain Papers, JC 8/5/1/16. A Radical [Joseph Chamberlain], "A Radical View of the Irish Crisis", Fortnightly Review, N.S. 39 (February, 1886):273-84.

town more by careful manipulation of their social supremacy than by formal political structures. This was amply demonstrated in 1888 when Chamberlain and his followers lost control of the Birmingham Liberal Association, and yet retained their grip on the town's politics. In justifying his localism, Chamberlain appealed to the concept of natural leaders. It was an aristocratic concept with was gaining adherents among the industrial leadership in the late nineteenth century. Its diffusion made the middle classes more like the aristocracy and so eased their assimilation into a national elite.

But, social politics had a more restricted meaning in the late nineteenth century. It described specifically the programs and policies which middle class politicians put forward to win, or maintain, working class support. Localism was central to Joseph Chamberlain's social politics. Before the 1890s, almost all of his positive proposals for social reform rested on local government. At various times, he proposed that education, housing, unemployment, land reform, temperance, and Irish Nationalism be solved within the framework of local government. No matter how radical his rhetoric, Chamberlain's concrete proposals were basically conservative, because they were to be administered by local elites according to Chamberlain's standards of local government efficiency.

Chamberlain's social politics were designed to take

the edge off discontent, to tinker with the economic system in order to make it more acceptable to the mass of the population.[36] The real conservatism in his system lay in its application. Localism gave him a collection of ready solutions to social problems. Its very flexibility blinded him to other solutions. He blamed landlords for bad housing, rejecting solutions which dealt with low working class income. He approached unemployment with simplistic and palliative solutions, ignoring deeper factors. What is surprising to us is that for half of his career, his contemporaries considered him a dangerous--or exciting--radical.

Chamberlain was a political activist, not a theorist. He used commonplace ideas to support positions he wished to take for other reasons. Consequently, his prescriptions for local government were a jumble of ideas in current circulation. His criterion of efficiency illustrates some of the confusion in his thinking. He did not separate normative and empirical statements. He held that local government enterprise was most efficient within a certain sphere

---

[36] In 1886, as President of the Local Government Board, Chamberlain issued an order to Poor Law Guardians which allowed them to hire unemployed workers at low wages for public works projects. Justifying his proposals, he said, "It will remove one great danger, viz. that public sentiment should go wholly over to the unemployed, and render impossible that state sternness to which you and I equally attach importance. By offering reasonable work at the lowest wage to the really industrious, we may secure the power of being very strict with the loafer and the confirmed pauper." Joseph Chamberlain to Beatrice Potter [Webb], March 5, 1886, quoted in Peter Fraser, Joseph Chamberlain: Radicalism and Empire, 1868-1914 (London: Cassell & Co., 1966), p. 125.

because he felt that it should be most efficient in that area. In the private sector, he held that it was less efficient because he felt that it should be less efficient. He judged efficiency in an ideal situation. Many of his prescriptions, such as the right to take land at fair market value, never existed, even in Birmingham.[37] He arbitrarily decided where local government enterprise was more, or less, efficient than private enterprise. Efficiency justified businessman dominance of local government--but which was premise and which was conclusion?

---

[37]"Royal Commission on Housing", Parliamentary Papers, p. 446, qq. 12,390-92.

P A R T I I

1 8 6 9 - 1 8 8 6 : A T T A C K

From the beginning of his political career until 1886, Chamberlain was a Radical, and for much of that time a leading one. His national political career began simultaneously with his local one. He became a member of the Birmingham Town Council in November, 1869, and chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Education League a month later. For four years, the League was his chief political activity. Though he did good work on some Town Council committees, he often missed meetings. Even his fame in the town was a result of his activity on the School Board, not the Council. By 1873, Chamberlain was clearly aiming at a seat in Parliament. Had he won it, he might have been no more closely tied to a specific locality than most other politicians.

He failed to gain a seat, and instead became famous as a reforming Mayor of Birmingham. When he entered Parliament in 1876, he did so as a representative of his own city. With a solid political base in Birmingham, Chamberlain applied the lessons of his term as Mayor to national politics. As he had fashioned a local coalition for reform in Birmingham, he tried to forge a national coalition of urban leaders. His object was to achieve national power for himself and his supporters. His move amounted to a sustained attack on the role of the aristocracy in politics.

But, England was not Birmingham writ large. He faced stronger class rivalries, entrenched conservatism, and a difficult and ambiguous relationship with William E. Gladstone, the leader of the Liberal party. Chamberlain saw the rise of English socialism as a threat to his power and ambitions. He tried to assert his Radicalism as an alternative. In 1885 and 1886, his Radical leadership failed, and his coalition of local elites turned on him and drove him into the political wilderness.

C H A P T E R I I I

MAYOR OF BIRMINGHAM

Joseph Chamberlain first put his localism into practice while he was Mayor of Birmingham from 1873 to 1876. As Mayor, he applied his business attitudes and skills to politics, turning Birmingham into a showcase for municipal reform. He did not depart significantly from established national patterns of municipal reform; his contribution was as a leader who made things work. He took advantage of a broad national and local consensus as to the direction in which municipal reform should go. His major departure in municipal reform was to fuse municipal and national politics. After 1873, the Birmingham Liberal Association supported his municipal reform program at the polls. By 1875, Chamberlain's personal ascendancy in Birmingham politics gave him a permanent political base. Birmingham localism was thereafter the basis of his power.

i

Chamberlain was elected to the Birmingham Town Council in November, 1869. He was recruited by William Harris, Secretary to the Birmingham Liberal Association, and George Dixon, Member of Parliament and a former Mayor. Until Chamberlain became Mayor in 1873, he was better known as a poli-

tical leader in the town than as a member of the Council. During his campaign for re-election to the Council in 1872, he faced criticism for his poor attendance at Council meetings.[1]

A month after Chamberlain entered the Town Council, he became Chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Education League, which was led by the same Birmingham men who entered the Council as reformers. The League diverted his political energies until 1873. In December, 1870, the Birmingham reformers suffered a shock when the better organized Conservatives won control of the first Birmingham School Board. Chamberlain led the Liberal minority on the Board through three years of hot partisan debate, and became one of Birmingham's best known political figures.[2]

Until 1874, Chamberlain tried to enter national politics. He developed a friendship with John Morley, editor of the Fortnightly Review. In September, 1873, the Fortnightly published an article by Chamberlain, "The Liberal Party and Its Leaders", in which he attacked the Liberal Cabinet and represented Radicalism as the wave of the future. In October, 1873, he accepted a candidacy for Parliament at

---

[1]Newspaper clippings on the 1872 election, Chamberlain Papers, JC 4/2/1-8. E. P. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government, (London: Edward Arnold [Publishers] Ltd., 1973), pp. 31-34.

[2]Francis Adams, History of the Elementary School Contest in England (London: Chapman and Hall, 1882), pp. 196-97. Birmingham Daily Post, October 10, 1873, p. 5.

Sheffield, but was defeated in the General Election of 1874. Temporarily frustrated in his national ambitions, he concentrated on Birmingham municipal affairs.[3]

A general impetus for municipal reform existed among Birmingham's Nonconformist business elite in the 1860s. George Dawson, minister of the Church of the Savior, started the movement among the Unitarians and Quakers in 1861. He supported European nationalist movements and admired Mazzini. Applying Mazzinism locally, Dawson declared that "a town is a solemn organism through which should flow, and in which should be shaped all the highest, loftiest and truest ends of man's moral nature." Accordingly, "a great town exists to discharge towards the people of that town the duties that a great nation exists to discharge towards the people of that nation." He founded the Town Crier, a satirical reform magazine, and recruited wealthy businessmen for the Town Council.[4]

In 1867, Robert William Dale, minister of Carr's Lane Congregational Chapel, took up Dawson's message. He spread it among orthodox dissenters: Congregationalists and Baptists. As ministers, both Dawson and Dale were excluded from membership on the Town Council, but both served on the School

---

[3]Joseph Chamberlain, "The Liberal Party and Its Leaders", Fortnightly Review, N.S. 14 (September, 1873):287-302.

[4]Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp. 61-79; for quote, see p. 75.

Board, and Dale was a leader of the Birmingham Liberal Association. Their reform message covered many topics; it was not specific to municipal reform. In municipal politics, the reformers concentrated on changing the membership of the Town Council, and had no particular reforms to advocate. They were equally interested in the education movement, which diverted the reform leadership from municipal politics for several years.[5]

The reformers on the Council responded to specific local problems, and found their first leaders among persons already on the Council. William Harris, founder of the Birmingham Liberal Association, led them until ill health forced his retirement in 1871. He worked closely with Alderman Thomas Avery, a Conservative who was Mayor in 1867 and 1868. Avery stood for narrowly defined financial responsibility. He was a stabilizing influence on the Council; commentators used the balance (manufactured by his firm of scales makers) to symbolize his personality. As chairman of the Finance Committee, he tightened the Corporation's financial procedures and reformed its method of servicing its debt. By the early 1870s, Avery had an unassailable reputation as an effective independent reformer.[6]

---

[5]Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp. 154-69.

[6]Birmingham Faces and Places, August 1, 1888, pp. 51-52. "Our Representatives, VIII", Birmingham Morning News, February 15, 1875, p. 5. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp. 105-06.

The reformers faced an entrenched opposition of small-scale tradesmen and shopkeepers, led by Alderman John Sadler. The Sadlerites' power was concentrated in the Public Works Committee, which controlled most town services. They met at the Woodman tavern, near the Town Hall, to plan Council strategy. The tavern became the symbol of their regime.

In 1871, a crisis over sewage pollution in nearby rivers undermined Woodman influence. The Court of Queen's Bench ordered the Corporation to cease fouling the River Tame. The crisis stimulated the Public Works Committee to long-delayed action, but they did not satisfy Avery, who was supported by the reform party. Unable to answer his criticisms, the Sadlerites challenged him to do better. Avery and the reformers accepted the challenge and a Sewage Inquiry Committee was appointed. Its report, which the Council accepted on October 26, 1871, was the first triumph of the reform party.[7]

---

[7]J. T. Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, 2 vols. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1878-84), 2:126-28. E. C. Osborne, Facts and Figures in Relation to the Sewage Question, Being the Substance of a Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Birmingham Town Council, June 27th, 1871, Published by Request, (Birmingham: E. C. Osborne, 1871). Borough of Birmingham, Proceedings of the Council (Birmingham: George Jones and Son, Town Hall Printing Office, 1872ff), March 24, 1871, no. 7591, April 14, 1871, no. 7648-49, April 21, 1871, no. 7676-77, April 28, 1871, no. 7680, June 6, 1871, no. 7748. Chamberlain was appointed to the committee but declined to serve, Council Proceedings, July 6, 1871, no. 7777. The committee's report recommended a dual program to exclude material from the sewers (which had been designed to carry water runoff only) and to treat sewage at the outlet. To pay for the new system, the Corporation would bor-

Their majority, however, was confined to the single issue of sewage. The reformers failed to block Sadler's election as Mayor a few weeks later. The decisive shift in the balance of power came in early 1873, when the Sewage Committee proposed transfer of the Nightsoil Department to their jurisdiction from that of the Public Works Committee. The issue was hotly contested, and the vote to make the transfer broke the power of the Public Works Committee. The reform party stabilized its control of the Council by the middle of 1873, but it still had a restricted program and was not directly connected with the currents of town politics.[8]

Until 1873, Birmingham's local politics was separate from its national politics. In national politics, the town was overwhelmingly Liberal, even Radical. The Birmingham Liberal Association protected Liberal control of the borough's three parliamentary seats, but it did not generally intervene in municipal politics.[9] The reform party on the Town

---

row £324,000 and obtain a Local Act for the purpose. For a long-range solution, the committee recommended formation of a regional drainage commission. "Report of the Sewage Inquiry Committee", Council Proceedings, October 3, 1871, no. 7907.

[8]Council Proceedings, November 9, 1871, no. 7938, January 7, 1873, no. 8586, January 14, 1873, no. 8589-95, January 21, 1873, no. 8596-8601, January 22, 1873, no. 8604-05. Birmingham Daily Post, November 10, 1871, p. 6.

[9]In 1870, the Liberal Association intervened to prevent Sebastian Evans, the Conservative party leader, from obtaining a Council seat, but it was an isolated action. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp. 133-34.

Council included both Liberals and Conservatives. Their opponents, the Sadlerites, possessed Liberal credentials as good as Chamberlain's.

The education controversy fused national and local politics in Birmingham. Chamberlain and the other leaders in the education controversy used their control of the Liberal Association to win control of the School Board. In 1872, the Conservatives tried to defend their position by attacking Liberal control of the Town Council. In March, 1873, the Liberal Association resolved to enter the municipal elections. The municipal and School Board elections were held two weeks apart in November, 1873, which further unified the contest. Chamberlain, who was to become both School Board President and Mayor in the event of a Liberal victory, led the Liberal forces.[10]

The Liberal Association leaders represented the fight as a straight party contest, but six of the ten contested Council seats were fought between Liberal factions. Party loyalty previously demanded only in parliamentary elections was extended to the Association's candidates for Council and School Board. Liberals who refused were expelled. Passions ran high over denominational schools, though temper-

---

[10]Reform party leaders asked Chamberlain to become Mayor when William Brinsley, Sadler's assistant, announced his intention of seeking the post. Newspaper Clipping, Chamberlain Papers, JC 4/2/61. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 137. Birmingham Daily Post, March 26, 1873, p. 5; editorial, March 27, 1873, p. 5.

ance was a secondary issue. The Liberal Association claimed victory: fifteen Liberals were elected to one Conservative.[11] The victory was less sweeping when the contests between Liberals are included. The reformers' net gain of friends over foes actually amounted to one seat.[12] The reform party already controlled the Council, and the accumulated forces of their opponents did not unseat them. Chamberlain was elected Mayor on November 10, 1873.

ii

As Mayor and President of the School Board, Chamberlain fused the separate parts of Birmingham politics into one system centering on himself. He used the organizing strength of the Liberal Association to support the reform party on the Town Council. Reflexively, the reform party's achive-

---

[11] Birmingham Daily Post, September 12, 1873, p. 5; September 11, 1873, p. 8; September 13, 1873, p. 8; September 27, 1873, p. 5; September 29, 1873, p. 5; November 3, 1873, p. 4. The Liberal, November 4, 1873, p. 4. Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, November 19, 1873, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/28.

[12] Four seats changed hands. Liberal reformer Alfred Arculus defeated Conservative incumbent Joseph Wadhams in St. Martin's Ward. Liberal reformer William White defeated Liberal incumbent Michael Maher in St. Mary's Ward. The principal issue in both contests was Temperance; the losers were the President and Counsel of the Licensed Victuallers Association. In St. Paul's Ward, Liberal incumbent John Coppock lost his seat to Liberal Thomas Aston. Coppock was a lukewarm friend of the reformers, but Aston was an enemy. In the only Conservative victory, Henry Cox defeated reformer Samuel Whitworth in Bordesley Ward for the seat of retiring reformer Edmund Tonks.

ments were hailed as victories of the Liberal Association. Conservative reformer Thomas Avery assented to the linkage when he addressed Liberal Association meetings in favor of two members of his Sewage Committee in the election campaign of 1873. Chamberlain solidified the newly-made alliance and supplied it with the momentum, publicity and achievements needed to make it invincible at the polls.[13]

The Birmingham Liberal Association therefore became the mechanism through which the reform party maintained its control of the Council. It included a large working class element. There had been an alliance between Radical businessmen and artizans since the campaign for manhood suffrage in the 1850s. The Liberal Association was founded in 1865. During the reform campaign from 1865 to 1867, it worked closely with the Birmingham chapter of the National Reform League, a working class organization. The two groups merged in October, 1867. In that reorganization, Liberal Association Secretary William Harris departed from the old format of a Liberal election committee and created the distinctive organizational format of "the Caucus". The new organization was two-tiered. Liberal electors in each ward chose a Ward Committee and officers, and sent representatives to the Association's Grand Committee, the "Four Hundred". The Grand

---

[13] A Birmingham Tory, "The Local Workings of the Birmingham Caucus", National Review 6 (November, 1885):363. Birmingham Daily Post, September 29, 1873, p. 6; October 3, 1873, p. 6.

Committee met only eight or nine times a year, with its power in the hands of an Executive Committee of one hundred and a Management Committee of eleven.[14]

The Association's real strength was in its ward organization. Party leaders took an active role in their wards, and were able to exercise effective personal leadership over the artizans who made up the bulk of the party's members. The leaders carefully manipulated their wealth in the prevailing social climate. Public subscription lists for local charities, published in the Post, always featured Liberal Association leaders as prominent donors. Great demonstrations were held periodically to celebrate John Bright's birthday, or for some other purpose. They reinforced the social benefits of party membership and gave the leaders a chance to display themselves. The leaders were praised as public benefactors and all benefits received by the town were attributed to their wise actions.[15]

Chamberlain used the Liberal Association to generate and harness enthusiasm for municipal reform. All things seemed possible in the intense, emotional atmosphere of his

---

[14]Trygve R. Tholfsen, "The Origins of the Birmingham Caucus", The Historical Journal 2 (1959):161-84. Asa Briggs, History of Birmingham, vol. 2: Borough and City, 1865-1938 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 168-72. H. W. Crosskey, "The Liberal Association--The '600' of Birmingham", Macmillan's Magazine 35 (February, 1877):299-307.

[15]A Birmingham Tory, "Birmingham Caucus", National Review, pp. 361-65.

administration, and the forces of darkness appeared in full retreat before those of light. He linked the politics of the Council chamber with those of the platform and raised mundane questions of sewage, sanitation and water supply to the level of great political principles.

Chamberlain's program was not original. Birmingham trailed other important towns in major reforms, and Chamberlain merely led the Council in catching up. All of his reforms fulfilled notions of sanitary reform which had gained national acceptance. With imagination, daring, and hard business sense, he explored the possibilities of municipal enterprise and accomplished in three years what had taken other towns decades to achieve. In 1875, he enthusiastically proclaimed, "In twelve months by God's help the town shall not know itself." [16]

Chamberlain assiduously fostered a sense of municipal patriotism and pride, and spoke of municipal buildings, parks, libraries, and enterprises as the common property of the community. He envisioned a town of stately municipal buildings and broad boulevards which would honor the principles and institutions upon which town government was founded. He stimulated philanthropic donations to the town. In

---

[16] John Morley, Recollections, 2 vols. (N.Y.: Macmillan Company, 1917), 1:147. J. L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 1: 1836-1885: Chamberlain and Democracy (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932), p. 188.

1875, he donated £1000 to the Free Libraries Committee, in order "to show in some practical way my confidence in our municipal institutions." He secured donations of several parks from wealthy citizens.[17]

The Town Council took up the message of municipal pride. It named the chief street through the improvement district Corporation Street, and in 1876 commissioned J. T. Bunce, the editor of the Birmingham Daily Post to write a history of the Corporation. The General Purposes Committee published and circulated Chamberlain's speeches in support of the gas, water and improvement schemes, and the Post continually praised his work. The citizens of Birmingham were continually made aware of their town's position as a national leader and of the accomplishments of its government. Even the hostile Birmingham Morning News caught the fever. In 1874 and 1875, it ran a weekly series on "Our Representatives", giving biographical sketches of the town's parliamentary representatives, the Town Council, and many of its leading figures.[18] In the following years, Birmingham newspapers abounded with such sketches, and the town's presses

---

[17]Chamberlain at the dedication of municipal buildings, June 17, 1874, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, ed. Charles W. Boyd, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 1: 39-42. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, April 26, 1875, June 6, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/45, 54.

[18]Birmingham Morning News, "Our Representatives", November 28, 1874ff.

produced a steady stream of books on town government and life. In the atmosphere of excitement and accomplishment, the leaders of the old Woodman regime were overborne. Even Brinsley, Chamberlain's opponent in 1873, admitted that the Mayor could pass anything he wanted.[19]

Chamberlain courted the active support of the wealthy businessmen who dominated the Council and were the officers of his political army. They carried out the important hard work of implementing his programs and continued his regime after he left for Parliament in 1876. He appealed to both their idealism and their interest. He utilized the prevailing spirit of Nonconformist philanthropy. Education, which had drawn Chamberlain and others into politics, remained an important issue. Temperance aroused a number of Nonconformists, and Birmingham became unusual for the extent to which representatives of the drink trade were excluded from Council membership. Poverty was approached through sanitary reform and improvement; Chamberlain and his followers believed that demolition schemes would solve the problem. Chamberlain focused these disparate reform sentiments behind one program and imparted a sense of movement to the whole.[20]

---

[19]Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 130, n. 78. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, September 12, 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/47. Thomas Anderton, A Tale of One City: The New Birmingham (Birmingham: Midland Counties Herald Office, 1900), pp. 8-15. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, June 6, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/54.

[20]Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, pp. 34-36, 144-49.

As the numbers of wealthy and socially prominent Councillors increased and the intense partisan debate died away, the social prestige of Council membership rose. After 1873, the Liberal Association could find safe seats for businessmen who would otherwise wish to avoid the hurly-burly of politics. This further increased their representation and imparted a sense of aristocratic noblesse oblige to Council actions.[21]

The new services which the Council instituted also indirectly benefitted businessmen. Municipalization stabilized and cheapened the gas and water supply, and the Improvement Scheme upgraded the business district. As streets and sidewalks were paved, and the sewers extended, the quality of town life improved, at least in its public areas. Chamberlain might argue that the poor benefitted most because town government provided to all citizens the services which the wealthy could provide for themselves, but as private individuals even the wealthy could provide those services only in a very restricted area.

As Mayor, Chamberlain threw himself into the work of the Council. His businesslike approach and impartiality surprised his opponents and won him support among the independent members of the Council. He was a model chairman with "a happy knack of rattling through the business, which

---

[21] Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 138. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, September 12, 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/47.

has saved both the Council and the School Board many hours of valuable time." When necessary, he would use insult or humor to move the meeting along. He utilized the Mayor's right of attendance at all committees to push and prod them into a more active policy. The Council revised its Standing Rules and Instructions to Committees. The General Purposes Committee, comprised of the leading members of the Council, became a cabinet, through which he presented most of his major proposals to the Council.[22] The new leadership made political decisions in evening "Smokerei and Talkerei" in the library of Southbourne, Chamberlain's Edgbaston home. The migration of Birmingham's political back room from the Woodman to Southbourne symbolized the class shift of local political power.[23]

Two major reforms imparted momentum to Chamberlain's administration. Before assuming the Mayor's office, he began negotiations to purchase Birmingham's two gas light companies. The time was propitious, though there was no public

---

[22]The General Purposes Committee conducted negotiations for the gas and water purchases. Council Proceedings, January 13, 1874, no. 9139; December 4, 1874, no. 9630.

[23]Birmingham Morning News, December 29, 1873. British Mercantile Gazette, 1876, pp. 2-3. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, February 17, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/48. George Titterton, "The Real Chamberlain", Searchlight of Greater Birmingham, November 13, 1913, p. 26. Council Proceedings, March 3, 1874, no. 9425; August 4, 1874, no. 9457, 9462; October 6, 1874, no. 9519; December 15, 1874, no. 9653; May 25, 1875, no. 9948. Morley, Recollections, 1:148-51. Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, p. 153.

demand for the purchase.[24] The Birmingham Gas Light and Coke Company was preparing to seek a Local Act to extend its works, but could not succeed over the opposition of the Corporation. Chamberlain was an excellent negotiator, having bought out most of his competitors while he was in the wood screw trade. With one agreement made, he approached the Birmingham and Staffordshire Gas Light Company, which agreed to sell because the directors feared to compete against the Corporation.

By the beginning of 1874, Chamberlain was ready to approach the Town Council with a concrete proposal. But, his own supporters doubted the measure. When he attempted to address the Council about the purchase on January 6, 1874, the Council voted 36-18 to adjourn. Seventeen of his own supporters voted in the majority, while only six of them voted with him.[25]

Chamberlain's speech at the meeting of January 13, reflected his need to convince the Council. He mixed the philosophy of municipal enterprise with a businessman's

---

[24]Relations between the Corporation and the companies had generally been contentious. In 1860, the Public Works Committee considered purchasing the companies, but did not act to do so. Conrad Gill, History of Birmingham, vol. 1: Manor and Borough to 1865 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 440-41. Two of Chamberlain's supporters mentioned purchasing the gas companies during the 1873 campaign. Birmingham Daily Post, October 6, 1873, p. 8; October 13, 1873, p. 8.

[25]Council Proceedings, January 6, 1874, no. 9136.

assessment of the prospects of the venture. He asked only that the Council approve the purchase in principle, with final approval to come after the General Purposes Committee negotiated the details. On March 24, the General Purposes Committee presented its report, and Chamberlain urged the approval of the details of a proposal which the Council had already approved in principle.[26]

The Corporation sought a Local Act to empower it to buy the companies. Railroad companies, some large consumers and neighboring local governing boards opposed the Act. The Sadlerites seized the opportunity to obstruct it, but they were defeated in the Council and in a ratepayers poll. The Corporation was too late to present the bill during the 1874 session of Parliament, so legislative action was delayed until 1875. The Act received Royal Assent on August 2, 1875, and municipal gas operations began September 1.[27]

Chamberlain took the chairmanship of the Gas Committee. He was a thorough manager, mastering every aspect of gas

---

[26]Borough of Birmingham, A Short History of the Passing of the Birmingham (Corporation) Gas Act and the Birmingham (Corporation) Water Act, with the Speeches of the Mayor (Joseph Chamberlain, Esq.) in Support of these Measures, and also in Favour of the Adoption of the Artizans' and Labourers Dwellings' Improvement Act (Birmingham: General Purposes Committee, 1875), pp. 1-15, 17-29.

[27]ibid., pp. 17-29. Council Proceedings, April 21, 1874, no. 9315-16; December 8, 1874, no. 9638-40. Bunce, Birmingham, 2:341-64. Elsie E. Gulley, Joseph Chamberlain and English Social Politics (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1926), pp. 43-47.

manufacturing and noting the results in a vest pocket notebook.[28] In its first six months of operations, the Gas Committee reported a profit of £25,338. Within two weeks of assuming control, Chamberlain was contemplating reducing the price of gas. The ease with which the gas purchase was achieved fed the Council's enthusiasm for further ventures.[29]

On December 4, 1874, Chamberlain proposed that the Corporation also purchase the Birmingham Waterworks Company. Unlike gas, there had long been a public demand that the Corporation control the water supply. The Birmingham Improvement Act of 1851 empowered the Corporation to buy the Birmingham Waterworks Company, but efforts to use its powers had foundered on fears of the expense. Though he mentioned the business advantages of purchase, Chamberlain emphasized the role of water in public health. But, the Waterworks Company, prosperous and without competitors, refused to sell.[30]

At this juncture, Chamberlain's wisdom in first proceeding with the easier gas purchases became apparent. The Council unhesitatingly prepared a bill to take the company

---

[28]A copy of this notebook is in the Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/1/H.

[29]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, September 12, 1875, February 17, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/47, 48.

[30]Borough of Birmingham, Short History, pp. 51-73.

by compulsory purchase, and it was backed by a ratepayers' meeting. Chamberlain argued for the Corporation before the select committees of the two Houses of Parliament, and gained the bill's passage after a sharp fight in the House of Lords. The bill received the Royal Assent the same day as the Gas Act.[31]

Alderman Thomas Avery, who had led an attempt to buy the Waterworks Company in 1869, was elected chairman of the Water Committee, and conducted the final negotiations with the company. Faced with the Corporation's powers of compulsory purchase, the company agreed to sell voluntarily. Chamberlain fulminated that Avery had agreed to an exorbitant price, but he admitted that the Corporation would profit nonetheless. By February, 1876, the Water Committee reported a profit of £3000.[32]

While the profits from water were used to reduce its price, profits from the gas works helped to keep down the rates, which benefitted the reform party at the polls. The gas operation greatly extended the Corporation's financial resources. In the first three years, profits reached £125,000, of which almost half went to reduce the rates.[33]

---

[31] Borough of Birmingham, Short History, pp. 73-78. Bunce, Birmingham, 2:406-13. Gulley, Chamberlain, pp. 48-51.

[32] Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, September 12, 1875, February 17, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/47, 48.

[33] Chamberlain's Gas Notebook, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/1/H.

With its expanded financial base, the Corporation was better able to finance Chamberlain's other projects.

The history of the rates during Chamberlain's Mayorality reflected the impact of municipalization. The gas and water purchases greatly increased the Corporation's indebtedness, but did nothing to the rates.[34] The total municipal rate was 3s 11d in 1873, before Chamberlain assumed office, falling to 3s 10 3/4d in 1874. It rose sharply to 4s 4 1/2d in 1875, before the gas and water purchases took effect, but after many other reforms had been instituted. In 1876, the first year of gas profits, the rate fell to 3s 10d. The Mayor took the occasion of the reduction in 1876 to chaff the Conservatives on the Council. Avery made a humorous speech in reply. Critics found it almost impossible to get a grip on an activist regime which lowered taxes.[35]

The momentum gained on major reforms stimulated all aspects of the Council's business. A fire brigade was established, new municipal buildings erected, the police force increased, public houses inspected, and Hackney Carriage by-laws revised. The Sanitary Committee achieved a nation-

---

[34]The debt rose from £500,000 to £2,500,000. Gill, Birmingham, p. 189.

[35]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, March 15, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/49. The school rate was kept to around 3d while Chamberlain was chairman of the School Board, but it rose to 6 1/4d after he left. Bunce, Birmingham, 2:48.

wide reputation for its work in sanitary reform and public health. The reformers ousted Sadler from the Public Works Committee at the end of Chamberlain's first term, and undertook a program of paving and sewering streets.[36]

Chamberlain's municipal program culminated in the Improvement Scheme. He proposed it to the Council on July 27, 1875, at the same Council meeting it was announced that the Gas and Water Acts had passed Parliament. His speech on the Improvement Scheme noted that the Artizans' Dwellings Act, just passed by Parliament, allowed general town improvements in addition to housing and sanitary improvements. He proposed that the Council rebuild a large part of the center of town. The Council voted unanimously to set up an Improvement Committee which would prepare a detailed scheme.[37]

In November, 1875, the Council adopted a scheme which covered ninety-three acres in two districts, a sanitary district and a smaller improvement district. The Corporation was to have the power to purchase over forty-three acres within the two areas, with discretion as to the sites chosen. Eight acres of streets were planned; the remaining

---

[36] Council Proceedings, January 6, 1874, no. 9134; February 17, 1874, no. 9213, November 9, 1874, no. 9546; December 1, 1874, no. 9619-20; February 1, 1876, no. 10,244-46. Bunce, Birmingham, 2:98-102, 275-78. Gulley, Chamberlain, pp. 52-55.

[37] Council Proceedings, July 27, 1875, no. 10,006-07. Borough of Birmingham, Short History, pp. 81-85.

thirty-seven acres were to be let on long leases, with the Corporation owning the freehold. The net cost of the scheme was £550,000, or £20,000 per year from the rates. It was the riskiest proposal Chamberlain had made, but the members of the Council followed him unhesitatingly. They approved the scheme 39-1. Avery cast the single negative vote.[38]

Chamberlain was occupied with the Improvement Scheme for the rest of his Mayorality. In March, 1876, he faced hostile landowners at a Local Government Board enquiry. He saved some of the scheme's provisions by getting George Sclater Booth, President of the Local Government Board, to overrule his own investigator. Anticipating approval of the scheme, Chamberlain secured a loan of £58,000 to purchase properties quietly before prices could rise. He placed the properties in an Improvement Trust and sold them to the Corporation at cost when it had the power to buy them.[39]

The risks of the Improvement Scheme appeared after Chamberlain left the Mayor's office. It was launched on a wave of prosperity, but fell into financial troubles in three years. By 1878, it was the principal target of Cham-

---

[38] Council Proceedings, November 10, 1875, no. 10,158.

[39] Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, April 10, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/51. Chamberlain and eighteen members of the Council guaranteed the loan. Bunce lists them and the amounts of their contributions. Bunce, Birmingham, 2:466-67.

berlain's local opponents, and in 1884 his national enemies picked up the refrain. In 1883, the annual deficit reached a high point of £18,995 over projected costs, and the scheme did not return a profit until the 1890s.[40]

The Town Council's immediate support for the Improvement Scheme testified to the "place of paramount influence in Birmingham" which Chamberlain had achieved by the middle of 1875. The momentum of reform, political organization, and personal style had produced a stable regime with Chamberlain as its unchallenged leader. Personal triumphs and tragedy reinforced his ascendency. In late 1874, Birmingham hosted the Prince of Wales; Chamberlain's conduct during the ceremonies allayed many fears of his "Red Republicanism". A few months later, his wife died suddenly in childbirth. A disconsolate Chamberlain sent in his resignation as Mayor, which the Council unanimously asked him to withdraw.[41]

For a time, Chamberlain was so important to the reform cause that he could not resign to enter Parliament. When a candidacy appeared at Norwich in May, 1875, Chamberlain's supporters talked him out of accepting it because the entire reform effort might collapse if he left office before the

---

[40] Bunce, Birmingham, 2:471-81. Briggs, Birmingham, pp. 80-83. Gulley, Chamberlain, pp. 59-60.

[41] Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, May 30, 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/45. Council Proceedings, March 9, 1875, no. 9787.

gas and water bills became law.[42]

He ran the Council with a dictatorial style in his last year as Mayor. In March, 1876, he forced through the Council Birmingham's first set of building bye-laws. James Deykin, his whip on the Council, remarked that the resolution was carried by a majority of forty-seven, forty-six of whom voted against their consciences. Chamberlain didn't care about their consciences; he had his bye-laws and intended to use them. Chamberlain's letters in 1876 reflected satisfaction with his success. In a characteristic statement, he declared, "The Improvement Scheme waits the report of the Commissioner, the Gas Works are flourishing. The health of the town is improving, and my trees in Broad St. are coming into leaf." [43]

iii

What was Chamberlain's impact upon municipal reform in Birmingham? He did not create the movement for reform, and only became its leader after the reform party had gained a majority on the Town Council. He did not supply its ideas. George Dawson and Robert William Dale were the local

---

[42]John Morley to Joseph Chamberlain, May 28, 1875, Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, May 30, 1875, June 1, 1875, Jesse Collings to Joseph Chamberlain, May 31, 1875, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/44, 45, 46, JC 5/16/1.

[43]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, March 5, 1876, March 12, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/49, 52.

intellectual leaders, and every one of Chamberlain's specific proposals had been tried somewhere else. William Harris created the Birmingham Liberal Association, which consolidated the reformers' hold on the Council. Thomas Avery won the reform party's first victories. What Chamberlain did was to bring these components together and focus them on municipal administration. He made things happen, and the Birmingham reformers took his success as the justification of their whole regime.

The extent to which Chamberlain departed from the norm in municipal politics can be shown by comparing him with Alderman Thomas Avery. Avery was the archetype of the normal municipal reformer. He was excellent at attacking specific problems which could be solved by good administration and careful financial management. He welcomed Chamberlain's advent in 1873 and campaigned for Liberal Association candidates against his fellow Conservatives. He remained an active Council member throughout Chamberlain's ascendency, and other Council members had confidence in him. They elected him chairman of the Water Committee and entrusted the final negotiations to him. When Birmingham and surrounding towns joined in a Regional Drainage Board in 1876, their agreement was the culmination of Avery's sewage policy, and he was elected the Board's President.

But, the balance, which observers often used to symbolize his character, made him independent of Chamberlain. He

refused to follow Chamberlain blindly, holding to the same cautious reforming principles during the height of Chamberlain's power as he did before and after. Significantly, he cast the only negative vote on the Improvement Scheme, which was to be an albatross to Council finances for fifteen years. Chamberlain, impatient of opposition, simply rode over him. For example, in June, 1876, the Public Works Committee proposed a resolution that the Corporation spend £30,000 a year for five years to pave all the footpaths and streets in the borough. Avery objected to the amount, but Chamberlain amended the motion to say "at least £30,000". The amendment passed unanimously before Avery could recover.[44] But Avery outlasted Chamberlain. Like Chamberlain, Avery served three terms as Mayor. Chamberlain left the Council in 1880, and Avery's terms neatly bracket the Chamberlain era: 1867-68 and 1881-82. Avery remained a member of the Council until the turn of the century. He is a good measure of the element of personal ambition in Chamberlain's program. Personal ambition did not affect Avery's reform impulse, but it was central to Chamberlain's.

During his years as Mayor, Chamberlain played to a national audience. He never dropped his national political ambitions, though he expressed doubts that he could accomp-

---

[44]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, June 6, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/54.

lish nationally what he had locally.[45] He entangled personal ambition and the reform impulse with the specific political resources which had advanced them in Birmingham. This had two unfortunate results. He never again enjoyed the personal ascendency he experienced during his last year as Mayor of Birmingham, and he spent the rest of his career seeking it. Also, he constantly attempted to apply Birmingham's experience to the entire kingdom. He not only attempted to reproduce his success in Birmingham, but to reproduce it in the same way he had done it there. He was a prisoner of his own success.

---

[45]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, May 27, 1876, June 30, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/53, 55.

C H A P T E R I V

"WE SHALL RECRUIT AN ARMY"

As it had evolved in Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain's system of localism integrated the Council with the caucus and a middle class elite with a largely working class following. Considering his success in Birmingham, it was inescapable that Chamberlain would attempt to apply his formula on the national scene. Localism underpinned Chamberlain's Radicalism in two ways. It was a philosophic commitment which showed through his proposals for social reform; all of his positive programs were to be administered through local government. It was also an integral element of his political organization, as embodied in the National Liberal Federation. His coalition politics presupposed that each local elite would maintain enough of a following among the working class to win elections. But, in the early 1880s, economic, social and political changes made localism and Nonconformity--the two sources of his power--less viable bases of political operations. From 1883, Chamberlain was openly responding to these threats to his power. He attempted to reassert his Radicalism in terms of the most recent political rhetoric, and chose the traditional Radical cry of franchise reform to maintain the unity of his coalition. He supported the franchise issue with the Radical Programme,

a compilation of reforms which is the most complete statement of his Radicalism.

i

In 1873, Chamberlain outlined to John Morley his approach for reorganizing British politics. The Radicals, he said, must focus upon a few leading issues and construct a party organization to advance them. Particularly, they must seize upon issues which generate popular enthusiasm: "Education for the Ignorant cannot have the meaning that belonged to Bread for the Starving . . . the assistance of the working classes is not to be looked for without much extension of the argument." [1]

Chamberlain tried out his approach in an article in the Fortnightly Review for September, 1873. He tried to unite all Radical demands into the formula, "Free Church, Free Land, Free Schools and Free Labour." As the basis of a nationwide party organization, he planned to use the National Education League, through which he had built a nationwide network of local chapters. He planned to dissolve the League and form a broader organization, however.[2]

---

[1]Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, August 19, 1873, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/13.

[2]Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, August 23, 1873, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/15. Joseph Chamberlain, "The Liberal Party and Its Leaders", Fortnightly Review, N.S., 14 (September, 1873):287-302. Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, March 15, 1874, Joseph Chamberlain to Sir

Chamberlain's policy addressed a very real need of Radicalism. As Chamberlain described the situation to Jesse Collings in 1878:

> There is no party of Radicals below the gangway; their only point of agreement is the fact that each one differs in some respect or other from the leaders; but their differences among themselves are really greater than those which separate them from the front bench.[3]

With such internal disunity, Chamberlain felt that the Radicals would never be able to achieve any of their goals. The policy he described to Morley was the one he followed so successfully in Birmingham. United on the Town Council and backed by a powerful party organization, the Birmingham Radicals routed their enemies--Tories and Woodman Liberals combined--and achieved all of their goals. He felt that Radicals could do the same on the national level if only they would subordinate personal rivalries and set priorities in pursuing their goals.[4]

Though Chamberlain outlined his program to Morley in 1873, his plans were delayed because he failed to be elected to Parliament in 1874. But, he lost no time after he became Member for Birmingham in July, 1876. Before he was

---

Charles Dilke, March 17, 1874, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, f. 23, ff. 24-25.

[3]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, February 26, 1878, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/78.

[4]D. A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: A Study in Leadership and Policy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 41.

in the House two weeks, he had organized a caucus of six Radical Members to act on the principle of "perfect loyalty one to another, and entire absence of all personal considerations--each to do whatever the others think best." But, early in the 1877 session, Chamberlain's little party fell apart, unable to overcome the individualism of its members. Instead, it became a "party of two", Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. He never was successful at uniting the Radicals in Parliament.[5]

Therefore, Chamberlain returned to the idea of national party organization. Though Birmingham was unique in the degree to which political organization dominated municipal politics, it was only one of many towns to have a Liberal Association. A coalition of these associations might give Chamberlain the base of support among Radicals outside of Parliament that he was unable to obtain inside. In 1877, Chamberlain and his Birmingham followers took the lead in organizing the National Liberal Federation.[6]

On May 31, 1877, delegations from the Birmingham Liberal Association and ninety-four other Liberal constituency or-

---

[5]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, July 27, 1876, February 8, 1877, Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, February 6, 1877, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/58, 59, JC 5/54/158. T. H. S. Escott, "The Party of Two--Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain", Personal Forces of the Period (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1898), pp. 69-82.

[6]H. J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1959), pp. 125-30.

ganizations met at Birmingham to form a federation. Chamberlain presided over the conference and delivered the opening speech. He noted that the new political conditions resulting from an extended franchise, education and a cheap press had created a need for new forms of party organization. He felt that the old model Liberal Associations, which made membership dependent upon a financial contribution, were inadequate to the task. Although working class Liberals could not afford the contribution, their voting power made it necessary that the candidates and party policy be acceptable to them. The Birmingham Liberal Association, he argued, had been successful because it consulted its working class members on these matters. A democratic constitution would be the one requirement for affiliation to the National Liberal Federation, and one of the Federation's objects would be to reform the non-democratic associations on a democratic basis.[7]

As its founders conceived of it, the National Liberal Federation was an alliance of local elites, each with its own following of working class voters. It was an effort to use the power of localism to achieve national goals. But, several representatives at the conference were plainly afraid that Birmingham would use the Federation to dominate

---

[7]Proceedings Attending the Formation of the National Federation of Liberal Associations; with Report of Conference Held in Birmingham on Thursday, May 31st, 1877 (Birmingham: The "Journal" Printing Office, 1877), pp. 14-16.

their internal affairs. Alderman Baker, President of the Portsmouth Liberal Association, assented to the Federation only because it did not commit his organization to a particular program or to combining municipal and parliamentary politics. Robert Spence Watson, President of the Newcastle Liberal Association, accepted the Federation only because of Chamberlain's assurances that local autonomy would be respected. The Chairman of the Manchester Liberal Association was even more cautious. He agreed with the objects of the Federation, but hoped that the independence of its affiliates would be maintained intact. His delegation was at the conference simply to observe, he said, and he was not sure that his Association would join the Federation.[8]

The constitution of the National Liberal Federation established the same hierarchy of committees used in the local Liberal Associations. The conference elected Chamberlain as the Federation's first President, and two other Birmingham men as officers.[9]

Most of the Federation's local affiliates were less

---

[8] Proceedings, pp. 24-25, 28-29, 36-37.

[9] ibid., pp. 4-5. The National Liberal Federation: Its General Objects and Immediate Work (Birmingham: National Liberal Federation, 1880). R. S. Watson, The National Liberal Federation (London: T. F. Unwin, 1907), pp. 1-9. Hanham, Elections and Party Management, pp. 134-35. Donald Read, The English Provinces c. 1760-1960, A Study in Influence (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1964), pp. 177-78. F. H. Herrick, "The Origins of the National Liberal Federation", Journal of Modern History, 17 (June, 1945):127.

democratic than the Birmingham Liberal Association, though they adopted its outward forms. All affiliated Associations submitted to the requirements that non-subscribing working class voters be allowed to join the Association, and that they be allowed to approve policy statements and parliamentary candidates. But, in many towns, the Association's leadership exercised a much more stringent control over their followers than did the Birmingham leadership. They did not enjoy Birmingham's good relations between classes. The Associations shored up middle class control of the higher committees by requiring that members of the Executive Committee pay a subscription, or by providing that a large portion of the Executive Committee be appointed by the party leaders.[10]

The National Liberal Federation grew rapidly. Forty-six Liberal Associations joined at its foundation, rising to eighty-eight by 1880, although the eighty-eight Associations represented only sixty parliamentary constituencies. But, the Federation failed to be a true coalition of local elites. It became little more than a platform from which

---

[10]Moisei Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties, trans. Frederick Clarke, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1902), 1:184-85. Political Organizations Series, The Times, October 19, 1885, p. 13; October 27, 1885, p. 13; October 31, 1885, p. 8; November 10, 1885, p. 4; November 16, 1885, p. 4; November 28, 1885, p. 3; December 1, 1885, p. 5; December 11, 1885, p. 3; December 31, 1885, p. 7; January 11, 1886, p. 3; February 8, 1886, p. 13.

the Birmingham Radicals could press the Liberal party leadership to accept their programs. Though most of the affiliated associations supported their actions, many harbored resentments against Birmingham domination, which were to burst forth in 1886.[11]

The National Liberal Federation had ambiguous relationships with Radicalism and with the Liberal party. Radicals dominated the Federation and set its policy. It was considered a Radical organization, and most non-Radical Liberal organizations refused to associate with it. But, there was no Radical party as such. The National Liberal Federation was an alliance of Liberal Associations, and claimed to speak for the national Liberal party. The Radicals of the Federation regarded themselves as the true exponents of Liberalism, and sought to take over the Liberal party from the aristocratic Whigs.[12]

The Federation's claim to be the representative of true Liberalism was strongly reinforced by its relationship to William E. Gladstone. Gladstone had retired as the Liberal party leader in 1875 and had been succeeded by Lord Harting-

---

[11] Read, The English Provinces, p. 179. Hanham, Elections and Party Management, pp. 147-54. Ostrogorski, Political Parties, 1:183-85. Barry McGill, "Francis Schnadhorst and Liberal Party Organization", Journal of Modern History, 34 (March, 1962):19-39; reprinted in The Victorian Revolution: Government and Society in Victoria's Britain, ed. Peter Stansky (N.Y.: Franklin Watts, Inc., New Viewpoints, 1973), p. 258.

[12] Ostrogorski, Political Parties, 1:185-92, 241-49. Herrick, "Origins of the N.L.F.", JMH, pp. 128-29.

ton. But, he returned to politics in late 1876 to combat Disraeli's Eastern policy. Chamberlain sought to use Gladstone's moral leadership to give a cover of legitimacy to the National Liberal Federation, which had been formed in opposition to the official party leadership. Gladstone cooperated. On the evening of the founding conference, he addressed the assembled delegates in Bingley Hall. The Federation supported him in his campaign against Conservative foreign policy, and the former Prime Minister gave the new organization much of its moral and emotional coherence.[13]

Chamberlain underestimated the dependency of his own following upon Gladstone. In 1876, he wrote to Dilke that if Gladstone "were to come back for a few years (he can't continue in public life for very much longer) he would probably do much for us & pave the way for more."[14] It was a mistake Chamberlain made several times. He backed Gladstone because the Grand Old Man's moral crusade was useful to his own organizing effort. The pressing necessity for unity overcame objections to tighter political organization. The same defensive cry had helped establish Chamberlain's control in Birmingham in 1873, but at that time the moral leader had been John Bright.[15]

---

[13]Hamer, Liberal Politics, pp. 55-56.

[14]Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, October 10, 1876, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, f. 49.

[15]In 1873, the Birmingham Liberal Association's election newspaper, The Liberal, argued that Conservative con-

The combination of political organization and moral crusade swamped the Conservatives in the General Election of 1880. About the same number of Conservatives voted in 1880 as had voted in 1874, but the number of Liberal voters greatly increased. The National Liberal Federation reduced the number of superfluous candidates in English boroughs from twenty-one in 1874 to nine in 1880. Only three of these troubled Federation affiliates, and none of them prevented the victory of the official candidate. In the sixty constituencies with Federation affiliates, the Liberals won twenty-eight seats from Conservative incumbents, though many of them had been traditionally Liberal seats before 1874.[16]

On April 13, 1880, Chamberlain wrote a letter to The Times, claiming the Liberal victory for the National Liberal Federation. Asserting that the Federation contributed to the Liberal victories in sixty boroughs and ten county divisions, he argued that the caucus was a democratic force which had increased voter participation and responsibility. Also, he contended, the caucus candidates were generally

---

trol of the Town Council and School Board would threaten John Bright's parliamentary seat. The Liberal, No. 1, September 26, 1873, p. 1.

[16]McGill, "Schnadhorst", The Victorian Revolution, pp. 258-60. Trevor Lloyd, The General Election of 1880 (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 144. J. L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 1: 1836-1885: Chamberlain and Democracy (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932), pp. 238-51, 257. Hamer, Liberal Politics, pp. 79-83.

stronger Liberals than the nominees of the old Liberal election committees. He looked forward to extending the Federation's influence to the countryside in the wake of an extended county franchise.[17]

Chamberlain's claims ignored Gladstone's influence. In the aftermath of the sweeping Liberal victory, Gladstone was the indispensible leader. He brushed aside Hartington to become Premier. His hold over the minds of all Liberals and Radicals was unshakable. But, Gladstone was forced to recognize Chamberlain's strength. He was willing to admit Chamberlain and Dilke to office, but not to the Cabinet. They both refused to accept office unless one of them was given a Cabinet post. Significantly, Gladstone passed over Dilke, who had longer service in Parliament, and chose Chamberlain, who had a wider following in the country. Chamberlain was appointed President of the Board of Trade. It was considered a junior position in the Cabinet, but it was one of the largest departments and gave some scope for his business abilities. It also gave him some scope for political patronage.[18]

---

[17] The Times, April 13, 1880, p. 10.

[18] In 1884, Chamberlain's opponents charged that fifty-one of sixty-seven Receivers in Bankruptcy were Chamberlainite Radicals, and nineteen of them had been election agents. Chamberlain denied the charges and pointed out that the Conservatives had done the same thing! Garvin, Chamberlain, 1:430-31. Henry Parris, Constitutional Bureaucracy: The Development of British Central Administration Since the Eighteenth Century (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1969), p. 52.

ii

Cabinet office cramped Chamberlain's style of leadership. He could not take an independent line in parliamentary debate, and he did little platform speaking before the end of 1882. The Radical faction composed about thirty percent of the parliamentary Liberal party. Radical M.P.s consulted Chamberlain on domestic policy and Dilke (who was Parliamentary Secretary at the Foreign Office) about foreign and military policy. But, there was no formal Radical organization in Parliament, and Chamberlain and Dilke were obliged to defend Cabinet policy. With no generally accepted leader, the morale and cohesion of the parliamentary Radicals quickly disintegrated and they exercised little influence on Liberal policy.[19]

The Irish issue dominated the first three sessions of the 1880 Parliament. Agrarian crime in Ireland, Irish Nationalist and Conservative obstruction in the House of Commons, and occasional reaction in the House of Lords, almost paralyzed the government. The Cabinet's policy of coercion and conciliation multiplied its enemies. Conservatives opposed conciliation, and coercion divided the Radicals. Although two-thirds of Radical M.P.s joined Chamberlain in

---

[19]Michael Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism: The Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94 (N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1975), pp. 1-4. T. W. Heyck, The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland, 1874-95 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 241-46.

supporting the Crimes Act of 1882, one-third inside the House and a higher proportion outside, opposed it. Some of his closest associates, including John Morley and Jesse Collings, opposed the Act. Even Dilke contemplated resigning over the issue.[20]

The controversy over Irish coercion contributed to the growth of independent working class political organization. Opposition to coercion was most intense among working class Radicals, who held little sympathy for the rights of property. A large body of working class Radicals were permanently alienated from middle class Radicalism. This division posed a threat to Chamberlain's power.[21]

Since the failure of Chartism, working class leaders had accepted the need for allies in the middle class to help them achieve their political goals. They found their best allies among the Radicals. But, after the Reform Act of 1867, it was possible for working class representatives to sit in Parliament. The desire of working class leaders to elect such candidates bespoke a growing non-ideological class consciousness. They began to see Labour as a distinct interest which could not be adequately represented by middle

---

[20]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, pp. 54-81. David Aronson, "Jesse Collings, Agrarian Radical, 1880-1895", PhD. dissertation, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, 1975, pp. 51-55.

[21]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, pp. 66-67, 81. Willard Wolfe, From Radicalism to Socialism: Men and Ideas in the Formation of Fabian Socialist Doctrines, 1881-1889 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 75-79.

class M.P.s. Working class support for Radicalism was conditioned upon performance, and it varied according to the degree of congruity between working class and middle class Radical goals. Independent Labour candidatures were a barometer of those relations. Three such candidates stood for election in 1868, fifteen in 1874, six in 1880, and fifteen in 1885 and 1886.[22]

The growth of English socialism in the early 1880s contributed to working class militancy. Almost all working class leaders were influenced by it. But, socialism also appealed to the middle class. Under the impact of the depressions of the 1870s and 1880s, many Radicals abandoned their faith in Gladstonian Liberalism. The London Radical clubs were especially affected, and many of them evolved into, or affiliated with, new socialist societies. English socialism was very broad-based. Specific socialist doctrines, such as Marxism, attracted only minorities of socialists. English socialism is hard to separate from Radicalism, even in retrospect. Socialism affected every Radical's rhetoric, including Chamberlain's.

The proximate cause of the revival of English socialism was the visit of Henry George to the British Isles in 1881 and 1882. George, an American, published Progress and Pov-

---

[22]Barbara C. Malament, "The Origins of the British Labour Party: Some Interpretative Problems", a paper delivered to the Conference on British Studies, meeting at New York University, November 6, 1976.

erty in 1879. The book challenged the nineteenth century liberal belief that progress would automatically bring prosperity. Since progress made land more valuable, George argued, its owners would appropriate to themselves, in the form of rent, an "unearned increment" from the benefits of industrialization. The only solution, he held, was to eliminate the economic gains from private ownership of land. Henry George achieved sudden notoriety in England when he was arrested in Loughrea, Ireland in August, 1882. Before he left England in October, he was attracting wide attention. His books, Progress and Poverty and The Irish Land Question, were published in cheap editions, and gained wide circulation among the London workingmen. During 1883, socialism and land reform doctrines spread rapidly.[23]

Chamberlain's enthusiasm for Henry George varied inversely with George's influence. Before George visited England, Chamberlain read Progress and Poverty and was "electrified" by it. In April, 1882, before George's sudden fame, Chamberlain and Bright dined with him at the Reform Club, seeking his views on Irish land reform. But, Chamberlain was disturbed by George's impact upon the London workingmen, and sought an antidote. Henry George's doctrines reinforced the politics of class and threatened Chamberlain's

---

[23]E. P. Lawrence, Henry George in the British Isles (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957), pp. 13-15, 19-31. Wolfe, From Radicalism to Socialism, pp.

politics of community. He was not a person to stay quiet while the roots of his power were threatened.[24]

A threat to his position in the Cabinet focused Chamberlain's anxieties. In December, 1882, he was almost transferred to the largely ceremonial post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in order to make room for Dilke's entrance into the Cabinet. Only after a ten day crisis did Gladstone decide to leave Chamberlain at the Board of Trade and shift J. G. Dodson from the Local Government Board to the Duchy. Dilke succeeded Dodson at the Local Government Board. Though he maintained his post, the incident convinced Chamberlain that he was vulnerable to such arbitrary treatment, and that two years of inaction had damaged his reputation as a Radical leader. In early 1883, he moved to reassert his leadership.[25]

iii

Chamberlain was in a belligerent mood in early 1883.

---

[24]Lawrence, Henry George, pp. 31, 91, 102-04. Garvin, Chamberlain, 1:385-86. John Morley to Joseph Chamberlain, December 24, 1882, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/466. Joseph Chamberlain to Lady Dorothy Neville, January 4, 1883, quoted in Elsie E. Gulley, Joseph Chamberlain and English Social Politics (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1926), p. 210. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, December 31, 1882, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, ff. 323-24.

[25]Garvin, Chamberlain, 1:380-86. Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, December 12, 1882, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/24/340. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, December 13, 1882, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, ff. 315-16. Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, December 15, 1882, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/463.

He sent Morley a clipping from the Birmingham Daily Post which showed the beneficial results of his Mayorality. He concluded that "Unless I can secure for the nation results similar to those which have followed the adoption of my policy in Birmingham it will have been a sorry exchange to give up the Town Council for the Cabinet." Commenting to Dilke on a speech by Hartington, he was unalarmed at the Whig leader's conservatism. "I cannot complain, as he has as much right to talk Whiggism as you and I to spout Radicalism." But, he insisted, the vast majority of Liberals were ready for a new initiative, "So if we are driven to fight, we shall easily recruit an army." [26]

For his new politics, Chamberlain coined a new term:

> The politics of the future are social politics, and the problem is still how to secure the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and especially those whom all previous legislation and reform seem to have left very much where they were before.[27]

For the moment, much of Chamberlain's social politics was rhetoric. His response to the threat to his working class following was, essentially, to shout louder.

Principally, he attacked the aristocracy in the language of Henry George. He focused on Lord Salisbury, the Conser-

---

[26]Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, January 23, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/480. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, January 20, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, ff. 12-13.

[27]Joseph Chamberlain to Edward Russell, January 22, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/62/5.

vative leader in the House of Lords. In a speech at Birmingham on March 30, 1883, he accused Salisbury of obstruction, fractious and dishonest attacks on the government, and warmongering; he even aired the idea that the Conservatives were conspiring to block Liberal legislation by constitutionally questionable means. He went on to attack Salisbury's aristocratic status:

> Lord Salisbury constitutes himself the spokesman of a class--of the class to which he himself belongs--"who toil not, neither do they spin"--whose fortunes, as in his case, have originated in grants made long ago, for such services as courtiers render kings--and have since grown and increased while their owners slept, but the levy of an unearned share on all that other men have done by toil and labour to add to the general wealth and prosperity of the country of which they form a part.[28]

His language offended Salisbury's class and party, especially since it came from a minister of the Crown. But, it did much to restore Chamberlain as the Radical leader.

Chamberlain soon focused his political efforts upon franchise reform. It was not social reform per se, but appealed to the same sources of support: middle class conscience and working class self-assertion. It was a traditional Radical cry, and the Birmingham Radicals were the nation's traditional leaders in the field. Chamberlain had advocated extending the franchise in the counties from

---

[28]Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham, March 30, 1883, Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., ed. Henry W. Lucy (London: G. Routledge and Son, 1885), p. 41.

early in the life of the ministry. In January, 1883, he began pressing the issue earnestly.[29]

The issue was stifled in Cabinet debate. Both factions agreed that franchise reform must come before the next election, but they differed on priorities. Chamberlain wanted to take up franchise first and postpone all other reforms. The moderates wished to improve the government's legislative record first. Unable to move them, Chamberlain launched a public campaign. On May 3, 1883, the National Liberal Federation issued a call for a conference on parliamentary reform to be held at Leeds in October. On June 13, Chamberlain started his attack from the platform.[30]

The occasion for his speech was an anniversary celebration to honor John Bright for twenty-five years service as Member for Birmingham. Starting his speech with praise for Bright, Chamberlain quickly shifted to the assertion that "Every day the country is becoming more Radical and more Democratic." The country, he insisted, was ahead of the House of Commons. Any attempt to pass measures of social

---

[29] Joseph Chamberlain to Sir William Harcourt, April 10, 1880, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/38/119. Garvin, Chamberlain, 1:292, 313-14. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, ff. 13-16. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, January 5, 1883, January 20, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, f. 132, 43886, ff. 12-13. Joseph Chamberlain to William E. Gladstone, January 18, 1883, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44125, f. 181.

[30] The Times, December 27, 1882, p. 8. Lord Hartington at Bacup, January 20, 1883, The Times, January 21, 1883, p. 6. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, ff. 13-16.

reform through the present Parliament would result in very crabbed and limited laws. The solution was to expand the franchise. He concluded his speech with a call for full manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, and payment of Members of Parliament.[31]

Chamberlain had thoroughly broken with conventional Cabinet oratory. His critics fastened on some of his praise for Bright which implied an attack on the monarchy. Gladstone ordered a retraction. Speaking at the Cobden Club on June 30, Chamberlain praised the Queen, but asserted his independence of his colleagues. Reviewing Cobden's life, he asserted that it exemplified the full Radical tradition. Like Cobden, Chamberlain was willing to make realistic compromises, but he refused to be silent. Silence cost the Radicals too much, he asserted, and would only lead to the break up of the Liberal party. He would not give up his principles for the bribe of office.[32] But, Chamberlain was not as intransigent as he sounded. Though he called for manhood suffrage, he was willing to accept the extension of the household franchise to the counties. Far from pushing for immediate redistribution, he wanted it

---

[31]Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham, June 13, 1883, The Times, June 14, 1883, p. 6.

[32]John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 3 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1903), 2:111-14. Joseph Chamberlain to the Cobden Club, June 30, 1883, The Times, July 2, 1883, p. 6.

postponed until the next Parliament, because he felt he could get a better bill at that time.

In the autumn, he pressed his public attack. On October 17, and 18, the National Liberal Federation met at Leeds. There was strong pressure from the London Radicals to put London government reform ahead of the franchise, but the Federation voted full support for Chamberlain's position. The action appears to have decided Gladstone. At a Cabinet meeting on October 25, he made a speech about the next session "which virtually meant franchise first and the rest nowhere." Chamberlain delivered two strong speeches on franchise first in November and December. On January 4, 1884, Gladstone announced to the Queen that the Cabinet had decided to present a franchise bill alone.[33]

At the same time that he pressed for franchise reform, Chamberlain held out to his followers a vision of the benefits to be gained from it. He carefully assembled the most comprehensive of his platforms, the Radical Programme. It was published as a series of unsigned articles in the Fortnightly Review from July, 1883 to January, 1884, with additional articles in May, 1884, January, 1885 and July,

---

[33] The Times, September 7, 1883, p. 6. Manchester Guardian, October 18, 1883, p. 6, October 19, 1883, pp. 5-6. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, f. 166. Joseph Chamberlain at Bristol, November 26, 1883, and at Wolverhampton, December 4, 1883, Speeches of Joseph Chamberlain, pp. 46-63. William E. Gladstone to the Queen, January 4, 1884, Public Record Office, CAB 41/18/2.

1885. The series was published as a book in July, 1885. Working closely with Fortnightly editor T. H. S. Escott, Chamberlain commissioned the articles and edited them.[34] Though written by other Radicals, the articles contained Chamberlain's characteristic positions and represent the most complete formulation of his Radicalism.

The Radical Programme was not simply a compliation of Radical proposals. Many Radical issues, such as the contagious diseases Acts, temperance, the game laws, payment of Members of Parliament, and republicanism, were omitted. He subordinated some issues to others: Ireland to local government, housing and taxation to land reform, and all to franchise reform. Escott listed the three heads of Radical reform as education, land reform and taxation. Six of the nine articles centered on specific reforms: housing, the agricultural laborer, education, disestablishment, taxation, and local government, including Ireland. Chamberlain also tried to commission an article on Radical foreign policy, but it was not written.[35]

Frank Harris's article on "Housing of the Poor in Towns", published in October, 1883, pinned its recommendations on

---

[34]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, October 18, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/105.

[35]Joseph Chamberlain, et. al., The Radical Programme (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885; reprint ed., edited and with an introduction by D. A. Hamer, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971). Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, undated, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43887, f. 159.

Chamberlain's Birmingham Improvement Scheme. Shortly after the article appeared, the housing issue became a crisis. With the publication of The Bitter Cry of Outcast London, housing became the central issue of social politics. Lord Salisbury leaped into the controversy with an article in the National Review. He saw the problem as one of supply, and suggested parliamentary loans for housing construction. Salisbury's intervention was a complete surprise and drew praise from all quarters.[36]

Feeling he must reassert Radical interest in such a critical issue, Chamberlain replied in the December Fortnightly. His article was signed and was not one of the Radical Programme series. He repeated Harris's proposals in more explicit terms. The solution to all such problems was improvement, he argued. But, improvement schemes could only succeed if landowners were given no more than fair market value for their property. Excessive costs for land, he held, prevented many local authorities from acting. If compensation were limited, costs would be under control, and housing would be built.[37]

---

[36]Chamberlain, et. al., Radical Programme, pp. 62-91. Andrew Mearns, The Bitter Cry of Outcast London (London: James Clarke and Company, 1883; reprint ed., edited with an introduction by Anthony Wohl, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1970). Lord Salisbury, "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings", National Review, 2 (November, 1883):301-16.

[37]Joseph Chamberlain, "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings", Fortnightly Review, N.S., 34 (December, 1883):761-76.

Land reform was the second specific issue addressed in the Radical Programme. Only the franchise was more important to Chamberlain. He was more interested in presenting an alternative to Henry George than to the Tories. Since 1872, his associate Jesse Collings had championed the cause of the agricultural laborer. In the 1880s, he was pressing for powers for local authorities to take land and create allotments of land for small farms. Collings, the son of an agricultural laborer, was sincere in his effort to help the rural worker, but his campaign--coupled with franchise extension--was an obvious opportunity for the Radicals to break the Tory hold on the counties. The urban worker, often an immigrant from the countryside, was also interested in land reform. Chamberlain carefully kept Collings's proposals in the forefront of his program, but he subordinated it to the franchise. In his article on "The Agricultural Labourer", Collings loyally agreed that "First in order among measures of reform comes the possession of the franchise, without which the labourer cannot be regarded as a free man." [38]

The Radical Programme presented two more issues in early 1884. They were both Nonconformist issues: education and disestablishment. Francis Adams argued in "Free Schools" that school fees should be abolished for poor children. The

---

[38]Chamberlain, et. al., Radical Programme, pp. 92-125.

Birmingham Radicals had been pressing this issue for a decade, but without success. John Morley's article on "Religious Equality" discussed the mechanics of disestablishing and disendowing the Anglican Church. It was negative in tone. His only positive proposal was to apply church revenues to education.[39]

Morley's article appeared in the Fortnightly in May, 1884. Then, there was a hiatus of over a year before the last two articles appeared.[40] The franchise issue absorbed all others, as the Liberals controlling the House of Commons faced the Conservatives controlling the House of Lords. Chamberlain was also absorbed into the crisis. His great success had been to push Gladstone to take up the franchise issue. But, when Gladstone did so it became his issue. Chamberlain was assigned a subordinate place. Even John Bright, who was traditionally identified with franchise reform, received more honor than Chamberlain.

The Reform crisis reached its height in October, 1884, and was then compromised by the party leaders. Redistribution was bargained by Gladstone, Salisbury and Dilke. Chamberlain, who still opposed an immediate redistribution scheme, was bought off with an extra seat for Birmingham.

---

[39]Chamberlain, et. al., Radical Programme, pp. 126-206.

[40]Escott's article on "The Revolution of 1884", which appeared in January, 1885, was not part of the Radical Programme series (though it was included in the book) and dealt with the franchise issue.

Franchise reform was Chamberlain's greatest success in national politics, but it contained the seeds of failure. He was to see that in the General Election of 1885.[41]

iv

The rise of socialism in the early 1880s, reinforcing the development of working class political consciousness, produced various strategies for dealing with the new political forces thus generated. Chamberlain, faced with a threat to his personal leadership of the Liberal party's left wing, chose to try to shout louder than the new voices. He increased his platform activity, and his rhetoric escalated. In 1884, the Pall Mall Gazette pointed out the similarities between his language and that of Henry George.[42] But, his Radicalism was more conservative than his rhetoric made it appear to be. The conservative element lay in the role he projected for localism, which was a mechanism for perpetuating the rule of his own class. The working class was given rhetoric, but Chamberlain's system froze them out of real power. Every positive proposal in the Radical Programme was to be administered through local government. When we consider Chamberlain's overall concept of local government--as a limited enterprise dominated by business-

---

[41]Andrew Jones, The Politics of Reform, 1884 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

[42]Lawrence, Henry George, pp. 98-99.

men--the checks upon his Radicalism are apparent.

Localism was a halfway house for Chamberlainite Radicalism. He departed from the "night watchman" theory of the state, but did not reach the later concept of the state as a creative instrument. Local enterprise was an alternative to state enterprise. With local government to perform the positive, intervening role, the central state could continue as the traditional night watchman. With this compromise, Chamberlain and those who agreed with him could walk the line between the Conservatism they hated and the socialism they feared more as the 1880s advanced.

Chamberlain failed to take account of the strategies of the other party leaders, who were reacting to the same forces he was, and to his own actions. Ultimately, the heads of the two parties, Gladstone and Salisbury, defeated him. Salisbury's policy was clear: to win over enough moderate Liberals to allow him to have a Conservative majority. He did not want to have to make any concessions to the Whigs in order to do this, and he considered Chamberlain an ideal recruiter for him. Chamberlain, he felt, scared people away from Liberalism.

Gladstone was the more dangerous enemy for Chamberlain, especially as they agreed on many issues. Gladstone had great power over Chamberlain's own Radical followers. Chamberlain's approach to politics was practical: a matter of programs, party organization, and coalitions.

But, Gladstone appealed to the moral element in Radicalism in a way that Chamberlain could not. On the franchise issue, they worked well in tandem. Chamberlain proved that the issue was a "mature" one, and Gladstone turned it into the kind of crusade necessary to sustain a constitutional crisis. In the process, he helped Chamberlain hold his Radical coalition together in the face of socialist blandishments. Chamberlain's personal submergence in the Reform campaign showed that he was by no means the undisputed leader of English Radicalism. Both his coalition and his leadership were untested.

At the beginning of 1885, Chamberlain resumed his Radical platform rhetoric. As he did, he faced a test of his coalition in the upcoming General Election, and he faced a contest with Gladstone over who was to lead Radicalism.

C H A P T E R V

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM: A SUBTERRANEAN EXISTENCE

Historians run the danger of anachronism when they consider the relationship between Chamberlain and Gladstone. The bitter fight over the Home Rule bill affects our view of the years before it. Gladstone and Chamberlain did not like each other personally, and they often handled each other poorly. But, they were often allied in the 1880-85 Cabinet, and tended to come to the same conclusions about political and legislative priorities. Chamberlain usually counted Gladstone as a Radical. They cooperated on franchise reform and, before 1886, reached similar conclusions on Ireland. Local government reform was a less prominent area of agreement between them.

Local government reform was a secondary political issue. It was a species of administrative reform, not social reform. Local government bills were advanced or postponed as they suited other political purposes. The Gladstone Cabinet produced five bills to reform English local government. Only two of them were sufficiently noncontroversial to become law. The others fell prey to disputes over priorities and to contentions between rival localisms. Their history, therefore, illustrates several themes: the relationship

between Chamberlain and Gladstone, the influence of rival localisms upon legislation, and the low priority assigned to local government reform.

i

Agitation to reform local government in the counties began in the early 1870s. It started as a movement among landowners to limit the burden of local taxation or to shift it to the Exchequer. It found its strongest adherents among the Conservatives. But, this pressure was resisted by the Radicals and the moderate Liberals. The undemocratic nature of county government made it increasingly difficult for politicians to give financial aid to the counties without extracting some reforms in return. Radicals attacked the oligarchic structure of county government, particularly the right of appointed officials to levy rates. Their price for financial aid to the counties was the extension of representative government to them.

All parties agreed upon a basic framework for the reform. Essentially, the system already at work in the boroughs was to be extended to the counties, with necessary modifications. But, some politicians went further, desiring a significant measure of devolution from Whitehall to local authorities. Devolution would relieve the central government of some burdens and further extend the benefits of local democracy. To further complicate the issue, there

was strong pressure from the bureaucracy to rationalize the relations between counties and boroughs, fix the boundaries of local government areas, and systematize financial relations between Whitehall and the local authorities. Therefore, beyond the area of basic agreement, there was intense bargaining in terms of an immense mass of technical details.

In the 1870s, both Liberal and Conservative governments tried unsuccessfully to deal with the issue. Gladstone's first ministry tried to improve the financial administration of local government. In 1871, George J. Goschen, President of the Poor Law Board, introduced a bill for parish and county boards elected on a narrow franchise. The landed interest attacked the bill and it was withdrawn.[1]

In 1878, Disraeli's government tried to remove the objection to financial aid by conceding a limited measure of representative government. The bill contained many provisions to preserve aristocratic control behind democratic forms. It set up a County Board consisting of two Justices and two elected representatives from each petty sessional division of the county. The Board was to have the administrative power of the Justices, plus control over highways, rivers, education of pauper children, and adjustment of

---

[1]Simon Maccoby, English Radicalism, 1853-86 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935), pp. 386-87. "Memorandum on County Government Reform", [1882] Public Record Office, HLG 29/17/1607-08, 1613.

local government boundaries.[2]

When the bill was presented to Parliament, Chamberlain saw it as an opportunity to press the franchise issue. He vigorously attacked the bill, and proposed an amendment that "no reform of county government will be permanent or satisfactory which does not entrust the administration of the county business to a Board elected directly by household franchise." He was delighted with the "opportunity of a real stand up fight on the old franchise question", but he found the moderate Liberals weak on the issue and the Radicals too divided to present a common front. He was prevented from bringing his amendment to a vote. The government was no better off. They found no great support for the bill in their own party and withdrew it.[3]

Another Conservative bill in 1879 never reached the floor of the House. With only lukewarm support in their own party, the Conservatives were not prepared to face Radical attacks on their bill. As a result of the election of 1880, the bill was left in the hands of the Liberals, who were inclined toward a more complete measure. Politically, the outline of a basic trade was apparent: democracy for money. J. G. Dodson, Gladstone's President of the Local

---

[2]Memorandum on County Government Reform, Public Record Office, HLG 29/17/1608-09, 1615-16.

[3]Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, February 26, 1878, March 2, 1878, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/79, 80. 3 Hansard 238:908 (March 7, 1878).

Government Board, insisted that no new aid should be given to the counties until the local government bill passed.[4]

Before the Liberal Cabinet could produce a bill for the consideration of Parliament, they must first agree among themselves on its provisions and its priority in the agenda of government bills. There was little controversy among the Liberals over representation. Unlike the Tories, the Whig landowners who dominated the Cabinet were confident of their ability to control representative institutions.[5] Instead, the Cabinet argued mostly over devolution and the precise distribution of powers among the various levels of local government.

Dodson stood close to the Whig faction, so the bill he produced in the winter of 1881-1882 was essentially a Whig bill. The Whigs represented the landed interest in seeking rate aid, but their own beliefs led them to seek a strong measure which would effectively settle the issue of county government reform for the foreseeable future. As a practical matter, they liked schemes which would give landowners special representation, though more to ease the bill's

---

[4]J. P. D. Dunbabin, "The Politics of the Establishment of County Councils", Historical Journal, 6 (1963):231.

[5]Dodson felt that owners could be elected as easily as occupiers, and if they "do not care to exert themselves to get elected, they have only themselves to thank. Moreover, the business of the Council must necessarily fall mainly into the hands of its members who can afford the time and cost of attending." Quoted in J. P. D. Dunbabin, "Expectations of the New County Councils and their Realization", Historical Journal 8 (1965):356.

passage than through any belief in their efficacy. But, though they wanted a strong measure, they did not want it so strong as to threaten their control of their localities. All parties felt that the size of local authorities was closely related to their control. The poor would find it more difficult to be represented in county government, where meetings were far away and held at inconvenient times, than in districts or parishes. Also, by restricting the powers of local authorities, the Whigs could lessen the attractiveness of local government for reformers. They tended, therefore, to restrict the reform to county government, and to limit the powers of such authorities as were created.

The Radical position on the issue was represented by Chamberlain and Gladstone, though they were often backed by other moderate Liberals. They wanted a democratic measure. They resisted efforts to create special representation for landowners, and favored smaller units for representation and administration. They tried to strengthen district government at the expense of the county. Separately, they wished to change the incidence of local taxation by rating owners of property as well as occupiers.

In November, 1881, Chamberlain was appointed to a Cabinet committee to aid Dodson in drafting a county government bill. Dodson attempted to restrict the representative principle, recommending that one-third of the members of

the County Council be Justices chosen by other Justices. The committee disagreed and voted to have all councillors elected by the ratepayers, with owners to have two votes. This was changed in the draft bill to a provision that each voter would have one vote, but that one-sixth of the councillors at the first election would be Justices. The bill transferred to the County Council the administrative powers of the Justices, including complete control over liquor licensing and police. Boroughs with separate Quarter Sessions were excluded from the counties.[6]

Precise terms of financial aid to the counties had to be settled. In late 1881, John Lambert, Permanent Secretary to the Local Government Board, prepared seventeen memoranda detailing the workings of a system of assigned revenues. Certain national taxes would be assigned to the counties in place of grants-in-aid. The new system was not reflected in Dodson's bill, which simply authorized the councils to receive funds distributed according to another Act.[7]

---

[6]J. G. Dodson, "County Councils", November 15, 1881, Public Record Office, CAB 37/6/31. William Gladstone to the Queen, January 27, 1882, Public Record Office, CAB 41/16/3. Local Government Bill, March 10, 1882, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/1-163, cl. 3 and 4. Dunbabin, "Politics of County Councils", HJ, p. 229.

[7]Lambert's memoranda are in the Public Record Office, HLG 29/43/605-853. Dodson presents some figures in "Grants in Aid in Great Britain", November, 1881, Public Record Office, CAB 37/6/33. Local Government Bill, March 10, 1882, P.R.O., cl. 6.

The bill's limitations drew criticism. Gladstone declared that "now or never is the time to decentralise", but did not press his view. The bill was put off for other business. When Sir Charles Dilke replaced Dodson as President of the Local Government Board, Chamberlain warned him that "Dodson's draft is a poor affair and I doubt if you would care to father it." Dilke inclined toward a more comprehensive measure.[8]

ii

The Liberal government's concern with local government reform extended beyond the counties. In 1882 and 1883, they presented to Parliament two municipal corporations bills. The Municipal Corporations Act, 1882 was noncontroversial. It was a consolidating Act which combined the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 with the several dozen Acts which had amended it. It was inspired by bureaucrats as a necessary preparation for the county government legislation which would settle relations between the counties and the boroughs. The Municipal Corporations (Unreformed) Act, 1883, completed the tidying up process. Over one hundred tiny municipal corporations were left unreformed by the Municipal Corpora-

---

[8]William E. Gladstone to J. G. Dodson, January 10, 1882, quoted in Dunbabin, "Politics of County Councils", HJ, p. 230. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, December 31, 1882, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43885, ff. 323-24. Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, February 3, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/24/49.

tions Act of 1835. In 1876, a Royal Commission had been appointed to find them and recommend action. The 1883 Act provided that they must be chartered under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1882. If they did not secure a charter by 1886, they ceased to exist as municipal corporations.[9]

The reform of local government in and around London was more difficult. Like the small municipal corporations, the metropolis had escaped reform in 1835. The City Corporation, one of the most powerful vested interests in England, had prevented reform ever since. In 1876, J. F. B. Firth, a London Radical, began a campaign to secure a municipal constitution for the metropolis. His reform group made no headway with the Tories, but the Liberal Cabinet decided to produce a government measure. Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary, was assigned departmental responsibility.

Harcourt presented his bill to the Cabinet in December, 1881. It provided for a unitary municipality for metropolitan London. The ancient City Corporation would be absorbed and the independent vestries shorn of most of their powers. Chamberlain objected to the scheme, preferring a two-level system, with Metropolitan Boroughs sharing power with the central municipality. Harcourt replied that municipal functions were so interdependent that they could not

---

9"Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations", Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons) 1880 [c. 2490, 2490-I], vol. 31. Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, 45 & 46 Victoria, ch. 50. Municipal Corporations (Unreformed) Act, 1883, 46 & 47 Victoria, ch. 18.

be easily separated. Chamberlain found no support for his proposal, and declined to press his objections when Harcourt had Cabinet responsibility for the measure.[10]

He had more support, however, for his criticism of the provision that the London police were to remain under Home Office control. The Radicals, supported by Gladstone, insisted that the Corporation of London must have as much control over its police force as a provincial town. Harcourt, rattled by Fenian bombings in London, questioned the ability of a Watch Committee to administer the police, and ignored contrary evidence from the provinces. He also pointed out that the London Police District covered a much larger area than the proposed municipality, creating a problem of what to do with the remainder of the district. Exasperated, Dilke remarked that "Harcourt thinks himself a Fouché and wants to have all the police but nothing but the police." [11]

---

[10] Sir William Harcourt, "Memorandum on a Plan for the Municipal Government of London", December 13, 1881, Public Record Office, CAB 37/6/34. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir William Harcourt, December 21, 1881, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/38/129. Joseph Chamberlain and Sir William Harcourt, "Further Memorandum on a Plan for the Government of London", January 2, 1882, Public Record Office, CAB 37/7/1. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, f. 5.

[11] Sir William Harcourt to Joseph Chamberlain, January 19, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/38/27. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, January 20, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, ff. 12-13. Sir William Harcourt, "Police Authority in the New Municipality of London", March 1, 1883, Public Record Office, CAB 37/10/25. Note from Dilke to Chamberlain, March 17, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, f. 39. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, ff. 5-7, 18-24, 46, 49-50.

In April, 1883, the police difficulty led the Cabinet to postpone the bill for another year, but the controversy erupted with the same fierceness when the bill was brought forward again in 1884. Ultimately, Dilke produced a compromise which Gladstone reluctantly accepted: control of the police would be given only after the new London government had proved itself. Though Gladstone gave the bill an eloquent defense on the Second Reading, Dilke always had doubts as to what the Prime Minister would have done with the police clauses in committee. But, at this point, the crisis over the franchise bill overshadowed all other legislation. The London government bill was lost in the "slaughter of the innocents" when the government withdrew all other legislation.[12]

iii

In December, 1882, the appointment of Sir Charles Dilke as President of the Local Government Board provided an opportunity for county government to be reconstructed along Radical lines. Dilke had worked with Harcourt on the London government bill, and he was anxious to prove himself to his colleagues by bringing in an important measure. At

---

[12]William E. Gladstone to Sir Charles Dilke, April 11, 1884, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43875, f. 132. Sir Charles Dilke to William E. Gladstone, April 11, 1883, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44149, ff. 138-39. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, ff. 92, 96, 98-100, 120, 179; 43938, f. 3.

once, he began to plan a bill which would be far more comprehensive than Dodson had contemplated.

Dilke's entry into the Cabinet coincided with Chamberlain's decision to press the franchise issue. Never particularly interested in local government reform, Chamberlain still adhered to his amendment of 1878. He felt that franchise reform must precede county government reform. He argued that "Any Bill passed now would be a County gentleman's and County Magistrates Bill and would infallibly have to be altered when the labourers and others now excluded get the franchise." [13] The converse was also true. The franchise would settle the question of representation. Once the agricultural laborer could vote for Parliament, he could not be denied participation in local government.

Dilke was hard to convince, but Chamberlain received support from an unexpected source. Sir John Lambert, recently retired from his position as Permanent Secretary of the Local Government Board, visited Dilke shortly after he took office. Lambert argued that county franchise must come before county boards. His reasons were bureaucratic: the same electoral register must be used for both parliament and local government, and he felt that the county people should be represented before their local government was set up. Dilke accepted the argument and supported

---

[13] Joseph Chamberlain to William E. Gladstone, January 18, 1883, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44125, f. 181.

Chamberlain's position in the discussions with other members of the Cabinet.[14]

Their colleagues were not convinced. Gladstone was in bad health and did not participate. All other members of the Cabinet opposed franchise first. Lord Hartington took the opposite tack from Lambert. He argued that the issues of registration and electoral areas could be settled in the local government bill. Then, the franchise bill would be light enough to settle redistribution in the same session. He was supported by Lords Spencer and Selbourne. Lords Granville, Derby and Kimberly wanted to postpone franchise reform because it would produce a crisis that could lead to a dissolution. They wanted to pass some constructive legislation before again facing the electorate.[15]

Outvoted, Dilke and Chamberlain gave way. Chamberlain took up the cause of an Irish local government bill and an English tenant right bill. Gladstone supported him when he returned at the beginning of March. Only the tenant right bill was passed in the 1883 session.[16]

---

[14]Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, January 4, 1883, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/24/347.

[15]Lord Hartington to Sir Charles Dilke, January 9, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43891, f. 53. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, January 20, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, ff. 12-13. Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, February 3, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, f. 23. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43937, ff. 13-16.

[16]Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, February 4, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, ff. 27-28.

Dilke moved promptly to produce a local government bill. He went over a first draft before Easter, and circulated a printed draft to the Cabinet in late July. He favored a complete measure, covering both districts and counties, and he wanted a large amount of devolution. He wrote to Chamberlain, "I desire to burn down this office and give all its powers to the County Boards." Gladstone strongly supported him.[17]

Dilke's draft bill created elected district and county councils everywhere outside the boroughs. The District Councils were to take over the powers of the local sanitary authority, the Poor Law Guardians, the Boards of Education, and a half-dozen other local boards. Also, they were to have the powers of the Justices over liquor licensing, apportionment, and administration of several Acts. The County Councils absorbed all of the Justices' other administrative duties, and many powers of the Local Government Board to sanction district loans and approve other actions. All members of the councils were to be directly elected by the ratepayers. Boroughs over 50,000 population were to become counties, smaller boroughs were to be districts. The bill also settled a host of technical questions relating to boundaries, valuation of property, asylums, election law,

---

[17]Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, February 3, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, f. 24. William E. Gladstone to Sir Charles Dilke, December 31, 1882, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44149, ff. 125-26.

and finance. Its most important financial provision made owners liable for half of the rates.[18]

Chamberlain liked the bill, and thought "it could be popular and workable." The rest of the Cabinet thought it too complete. In November, a Cabinet committee was set up to redraft the bill and consider questions of finance connected with it. The committee split into two groups: Dilke, Chamberlain and Childers against Dodson, Kimberley, Derby, Carlingford and Fitzmaurice. Sir Edmund Fitzmaurice, Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, produced an alternative scheme which Dilke considered "good but very timid". He suggested that the question of district boundaries be left to the County Councils, and that the Boards of Guardians be made the rural district councils, though with some liberalization of the franchise.[19]

Chamberlain tried to strengthen Dilke's resolve, and suggested that he bring the matter before the full Cabinet, where he would have a majority. But, Dilke compromised with Fitzmaurice, adopting the Union areas for Poor Law

---

[18]Draft Local Government Bill, August 24, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43923, ff. 49-125.

[19]Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, July 8, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, f. 58. William E. Gladstone to the Queen, November 13, 1883, Public Record Office, CAB 41/17/24. Sir Charles Dilke to William E. Gladstone, November 19, 1883, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44149, f. 186. Sir Edmund Fitzmaurice, "Memorandum on County Government", November 20, 1883, Public Record Office, HLG 29/43/715-17. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43938, ff. 146-86.

purposes. The Guardians were to be a joint committee of the councils of the constituent districts.[20]

In another change, the committee raised the population for county boroughs to 100,000. Its most important contribution was to improve the financial clauses of the bill. The system of assigned revenues, which had been drafted by the Local Government Board two years earlier, was incorporated in a bill for the first time. Thirty-one separate central grants were to be terminated, and licensing fees formerly paid to the Exchequer were to be paid to the county treasury. In addition, the proceeds of 1d of the income tax collected from the county were to be paid to the county. Certain excises on carriages and dogs were to cease and the county was empowered to tax them.[21]

Dilke's draft bill was a dead letter before it was completed. In the fall of 1883, Chamberlain's campaign for franchise reform reached its height. Dilke's bill, already subordinated to Harcourt's London government bill, was doomed by Gladstone's conversion to the franchise issue. Dilke continued to work on his "now useless Local Government Bill", and suggested to Gladstone that it might be published before the next election. The Liberal ministry had no more

---

[20]Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, November 29, 1883, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43886, ff. 89-90. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43938, ff. 188, 204.

[21]Local Government Bill, January 15, 1884, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/167-353.

opportunity for local government reform. Dilke's bill was never introduced. Dilke had departmental responsibility for the franchise and redistribution bills. He and Gladstone were the leading negotiators with Salisbury over redistribution. Local government reform was left over to the next Parliament.[22]

iv

Liberal efforts to reform local government thus appeared to have ended in futility. Four more years of internal debate ensued before Parliament was presented with a local government bill. But, Dilke's bill was not lost, for it was the foundation of all future bills.

Local government reform failed because of its low priority as a legislative issue. Only Dilke and Harcourt seemed to be genuinely interested in seeing their bills become law. Chamberlain and Gladstone had no compunction about shoving them aside for more popular legislation. Even the Whig leaders were less interested in local government reform for its own sake than in using it to slow down the franchise bill.

Rival localisms contributed to the bill's demise.

---

[22]Sir Charles Dilke to William E. Gladstone, January 11, 1884, January 15, 1884, April 3, 1884, Gladstone Papers, Add. Mss. 44149, ff. 196-97, 198-99, 207. Andrew Jones, The Politics of Reform, 1884 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 204-13.

Local government touched questions of power and wealth. The Whigs, who had much to lose, favored cautious legislation to keep from losing control of their local governments, and their local governments' taxing powers. The Radicals favored comprehensive legislation and were afraid that a half-measure would block further reform. Chamberlain preferred to change the political balance in the counties before he ratified that change with new local institutions.

We should note that Chamberlain's position on local government reform was not strictly a negative one. He did not merely shunt it aside to make room for the franchise issue. He genuinely believed that franchise reform was a necessary precondition for county government reform. As always, he perceived the roots of power. He consistently held that government in England should be conducted upon the widest possible franchise, and he had confidence that he could maintain his power in that environment. To give the agricultural laborer the parliamentary franchise would bring in its train democratic local government. His prediction was correct. It fell to the Conservatives to draft the bill which became law. Though that bill was far more restricted than Dilke's bill, it was a considerable advance upon what the Conservatives had offered in 1878. Once the laborer had been granted representation in Parliament, even the Tories were forced to concede him participation in local government.

The local government issue illustrates considerable common ground between Chamberlain and Gladstone. They agreed in opposing Dodson's restrictions on representation, on control of the London police, and on the priority of franchise, tenant rights and an Irish local government bill over English local government reform. There was no reason to believe that they would inevitably disagree over Home Rule.

Thus far, local government reform had led a subterranean existence in the Liberal ministry. Often shunted aside, it had developed a strong claim to be the next reform after franchise and redistribution. Chamberlain did not agree--he favored land reform--but he was forced to accomodate a growing consensus among politicians that local government was next. Local government was a prominent issue in 1885. Ironically, the next local government bill to be drafted was Chamberlain's.

C H A P T E R V I

THE COLLAPSE OF CHAMBERLAINITE RADICALISM

At the beginning of 1885, Joseph Chamberlain anticipated an increase of Radical influence in the British Parliament. T. H. S. Escott confidently predicted that the Radicals would emerge from the next election as "the controlling party in the State." Chamberlain was more cautious, aware that the swing of the pendulum could bring in the Tories. His goal was to give the Radicals a dominant voice within the Liberal party. Throughout 1885, Chamberlain prepared for the coming election. He was delighted when the Liberal government fell in June, for it freed him of any responsibility for Liberal policy and gave him a Tory government to attack. The 1885 election was a test of his Radical leadership and his policy of verbal assaults on the landed interest. It forced him to face the fact that he could not win votes by simply adding items to the Radical Programme. The results of the election gravely weakened his position within the Liberal party and left him powerless to stop Gladstone's move toward Home Rule.[1]

---

[1]Joseph Chamberlain, et. al., The Radical Programme (London: Chapman and Hall, 1885; reprint ed., edited with an introduction by D. A. Hamer, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971), p. 21. Joseph Chamberlain to John Morley, February 2, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/601. Joseph Chamberlain to J. T. Bunce, June 11, 1885, quoted in J. L. Garvin,

i

As we have noted in previous chapters, the localistic basis of Chamberlainite Radicalism concealed a dangerous split between middle class and working class Radicals. The organizational structure of the National Liberal Federation assumed that each local party organization would be able to deliver the votes necessary to elect candidates. The national organization only supplemented local efforts. It was able to give a lead only when the local Liberal Association leaders would take it. These local leaders often followed willingly, but they did so only insofar as their ideas and interests dictated. Most of them were less willing than Chamberlain to appeal strongly for working class support. The strongest Associations were dominated by Nonconformists, who did not like to see their favorite issues subordinated to Chamberlain's social politics. He was forced to appeal to both parts of his following, so land reform and working class housing shared billing with disestablishment and free education. The Nonconformist issues multiplied his enemies. His appeal was dissipated, and his program became confused and contradictory.

In geographical terms, Chamberlain hoped to consolidate the Radical position in the towns and extend Radical influ-

---

The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 2: 1885-1895: Disruption and Combat (London: Macmillan and Company, 1933), pp. 7-8.

ence in the countryside. By 1885, Jesse Collings had won widespread support among the agricultural laborers. The National Liberal Federation supported Collings with an organizing effort in the rural parishes. Chamberlain predicted a sweep of the counties at the elections. He did not face the same contradictions seeking the votes of the agricultural laborers as he did seeking those of urban workers. He had no allies among the possessing classes in rural England, so his appeal to the rural worker came through clearly.[2]

The election of 1885 took place in the wake of a massive restructuring of British electoral geography. The kingdom was divided into single member constituencies. Only twenty-four boroughs and the universities continued to elect two members. Ninety-one small boroughs had been merged with the county divisions and their seats given to the large urban areas. Metropolitan London had fifty-nine seats, compared to its former twenty-two. Fifteen other large boroughs doubled their representation from thirty-five to seventy seats.[3]

The disappearance of the small boroughs lent greater

---

[2]Francis Schnadhorst, County Organization: A Paper Read at a Conference of Liberals Held at Cardiff, on October 28th, 1880 (Birmingham: National Liberal Federation, 1880). Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, June 30, 1885, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43887, ff. 157-58.

[3]Andrew Jones, The Politics of Reform, 1884 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 3.

immediacy to Chamberlain's campaign with the agricultural laborers. Some effort must be made to win them over, if the old Liberal towns were not to be swamped.

The large towns had all been divided into single-member constituencies. This confronted the National Liberal Federation and its affiliates with an organizational problem. The caucus system guaranteed working class representatives a vote in the selection of candidates. Parliamentary candidates for the entire borough had been selected by the Grand Committee, the "Eight Hundred", as it was in Birmingham in 1884. The new parliamentary divisions called for a matching unit in the structure of the caucus. For Birmingham, Chamberlain announced, a new level of committees would be created. There would be district councils in each division to select parliamentary candidates. The district councils would be combined in a United Liberal Association of Birmingham, to collect and express the opinion of the whole town. This new Grand Committee would be the "Two Thousand." Other towns followed the Birmingham example. In subsequent years, most of the town-wide Liberal Associations faded out of existence or became relatively powerless in the face of divisional autonomy. The Birmingham Liberal Association remained strong, however.[4]

---

[4]Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham, January 5, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, ed. Charles W. Boyd, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 1:133. Moisei Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political

This organizational restructuring could not overcome the divisive effects of redistribution. Chamberlain could not accurately assess the impact of the new electoral geography. One midland Radical has described his errors of judgement:

> The London seat he thought best went Tory, the other London seat and a big borough division, which he put next, have been in and out ever since, while my own prize constituency [East Northants], the steadiest in Great Britain, he had little faith in.[5]

But Chamberlain did not have any less foresight than his colleagues. Nobody knew what the effect of redistribution would be. Even Dilke and Salisbury, who negotiated it, calculated that the large towns would remain Liberal and the counties would stay strongly Conservative. Each party had designs upon the other's territory, but they had no clear idea of how successful they could be.[6]

ii

Chamberlain's first step in preparing for the election was to reassert the independence he had enjoyed two years earlier, but which had been eclipsed during the Reform crisis. In two speeches at Birmingham and one at Ipswich

---

Parties, trans. Frederick Clarke, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1902), 1:338-40.

[5]F. H. Channing, Memories of Midland Politics, 1885-1910, quoted in Jones, Politics of Reform, p. 207, n. 3.

[6]ibid, pp. 207-08.

(Jesse Collings's constituency), he made a strong appeal to the working class. The Liberal party, he argued, must appeal to the newly enfranchised working class voter. In rhetoric reminiscent of Henry George's, he argued that the laborer's original communal rights to land had been stolen by the landed class. They must be paid for, he asserted. So, "what ransom will property pay for the security it enjoys? . . . I think in the future we shall hear a great deal more about the obligations of property, and we shall not hear quite so much about its rights." He congratulated his audience on "the fair prospect which is opening up for the class to which you belong." He predicted that new social legislation would lessen the evils of poverty and bring the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[7]

Chamberlain's assertion that possession of property involved obligations as well as rights was not a new element in his speeches. It was, in fact, a fundamental element in his social thinking. But, the word "ransom", like the phrase "they toil not, neither do they spin" two years before, offended many people. There were the usual protests, and in his speech at Ipswich two weeks later, he changed the word "ransom" to "insurance", but he held to the concept.[8]

---

[7]Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham Town Hall, January 5, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:130-39.

[8]Joseph Chamberlain at Ipswich, January 14, 1885, ibid., pp. 140-150.

He continued his attack on irresponsible property rights in his second Birmingham speech on January 29, and declared his faith in manhood suffrage. By this time, his "terror", as Dilke called it, put Gladstone in an acutely uncomfortable position. He remonstrated with Chamberlain, who replied with a Radical manifesto. Chamberlain considered resigning, but feared to have Gladstone openly against him. He stopped his speechmaking, but he had accomplished his object of independence.[9]

In the remaining four months of the Gladstone ministry, Chamberlain focused on the Irish question. The Crimes Act of 1882 was due to expire at the end of the session, and any attempt to renew it would again split the Radicals. He tried to provide an alternative to coercion by negotiating a partial settlement with Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish Nationalist leader. His effort failed. The choice of an intermediary was poor, and misunderstandings developed between Chamberlain and Parnell. Chamberlain could not persuade the Cabinet to accept his scheme of representative county councils and a central board for Ireland. Though supported by Gladstone, Chamberlain and Dilke were unable to move the Cabinet on this or any other issue. The two

---

[9]Joseph Chamberlain at Birmingham, January 29, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:151-60. Joseph Chamberlain to William E. Gladstone, February 7, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/34/76. J. L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 1: 1836-1885: Chamberlain and Democracy (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932), pp. 548-58.

Radicals sent in their resignations, but the government fell before Gladstone could act on them.[10]

Freed from the restrictions of his Cabinet post, Chamberlain began preparing in earnest for the election. He resurrected the Radical Programme. The July issue of the Fortnightly Review carried its last two articles. Francis Adams's article on "Taxation and Finance" picked up a theme of Chamberlain's speeches: that the burden of taxation ought to be redistributed on the principle of equality of sacrifice. He suggested graduated income and inheritance taxes, and a restriction of government expenditure to legitimate public purposes. The article strengthened Chamberlain's appeal to the working class.[11]

The final article in the series, "Local Government and Ireland", by T. H. S. Escott and George Fottrell, acknowledged the growing power of the local government issue, though it contained no new proposals. Escott's description of a reformed local government matched the provisions of Dilke's local government bill, and Fottrell's proposals for Ireland were a copy of Chamberlain's Irish central board scheme. The significance of the article was the link it proposed between the two issues. It was Chamberlain's first attempt

---

[10] C. H. D. Howard, "Joseph Chamberlain, Parnell and the Irish 'Central Board' Scheme, 1884-5", Irish Historical Studies, 8 (1953):324-61. Joseph Chamberlain, Memoranda on Ireland, April 11, 1885, April 25, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 8/5/1/11, 12.

[11] Chamberlain, et. al., The Radical Programme, pp. 207-32.

to increase the palatability of one of his favorite projects by linking it to local government reform.[12]

As soon as the articles were published, the entire Radical Programme was issued as a book, with a preface by Chamberlain. Symbolism was observed: the book had a red cover.

Chamberlain began his speaking campaign as soon as the government resigned. His language was more moderate than it had been in his January speeches. He appealed more to the moral sensibilities of property owners and less to the revolutionary aspirations of workers. He stressed three issues: free education, purchase of land for allotments and small holdings, and equality of sacrifice in taxation. Speaking at Warrington on September 8, he described his proposals as the Radical Programme, even though they differed in details from the book.

Chamberlain was disappointed in Gladstone's election manifesto, issued on September 17. It promised reforms in five areas: House of Commons procedure, finance, local government, the land laws, and registration of voters. Though Chamberlain considered Gladstone's position on taxation acceptable, the manifesto did not mention his land purchase proposals, and it downplayed free education. He protested privately and issued a public ultimatum... that the

---

[12]Chamberlain, et. al., The Radical Programme, pp. 233-65.

next Liberal government would have to include these proposals in its program or he would not join it. George J. Goschen, Chamberlain's most vocal opponent among the Whigs, dubbed his additions the "unauthorized programme", to distinguish it from Gladstone's official one. Characteristically, Chamberlain adopted the term.[13]

Chamberlain's ability to make his ultimatium effective depended upon his influence in the election. He faced many difficulties. Gladstone's manifesto was vague because nothing more specific could encompass the contending wings of the Liberal party. The Tories mounted a vigorous campaign. Lord Randolph Churchill, the creator of Tory Democracy, carried the Conservative campaign into the large towns. He even dared accept a nomination to stand against John Bright in the Central Birmingham division. In Birmingham and elsewhere, Churchill exploited the fair trade issue. Fair trade, the opposite of free trade, was a move ment to impose tariffs against foreign competition. A

---

[13]C. H. D. Howard, "Joseph Chamberlain and the 'Unauthorized Programme'", English Historical Review, 65 (October, 1950):482-86. Joseph Chamberlain to William E. Gladstone, September 20, 1885, copy in Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43887, ff. 171-72. Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, September 20, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/108. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, September 20, 1885, September 21, 1885, September 24, 1885, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43887, ff. 167-68, 169-70, 173. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir William Harcourt, September 20, 1885, October 5, 1885, October 9, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/38/147, 150, 151. Joseph Chamberlain at Victoria Hall, London, September 24, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:210-13.

product of Britain's economic troubles, the fair trade movement was popular among employers and workingmen in the large industrial centers, particularly in Lancashire. It was brought to Chamberlain's attention when he returned to Birmingham in mid-October to contest his own seat. Gladstone was sufficiently alarmed to ask Chamberlain and Dilke to campaign aganist it.[14]

Free education did not win the support Chamberlain had hoped for, and it landed him in the midst of a religious controversy. Ratepayers were worried about the effect that the abolition of school fees would have on their school rates. Churchmen knew that the abolition of fees in government-supported schools would force many private schools into bankruptcy. When Chamberlain proposed to subsidize both types of schools with treasury grants, he raised opposition among his own Nonconformist supporters. This knot of conflicting religious groups forced many Radicals to distance themselves from Chamberlain, and even he de-emphasised the issue in the last month of campaigning. Free education was especially damaging in London, where Dilke considered repudiating the Radical Programme.[15]

---

[14]Robert Rhodes James, Lord Randolph Churchill (N.Y.: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1959), pp. 117-18, 138, 214. Michael Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism: The Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94 (N.Y.: Barnes and Noble, 1975), p. 25. William E. Gladstone to Joseph Chamberlain, November 11, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/34/44.

[15]Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism, pp. 33-35. Howard, "Unauthorized Programme", EHR, pp. 487-88. John Morley to

If free education was damaging, disestablishment was disastrous. John Morley's article in the Radical Programme stirred cries of "the church in danger". His proposals for disendowment of the Church of England repelled even those who supported its disestablishment. Gladstone declared the article "outrageously unjust." To many people, it seemed like robbery. Disestablishment set Nonconformists against Anglicans and Roman Catholics, and gave energy to the Conservative party. Gladstone decried the harm which the issue visited on the Liberal party, and asked Chamberlain to relegate it to the distant future. Chamberlain, who had de-emphasised the issue from early in the campaign, gladly complied. However, the damage was already done.[16]

With the Nonconformist parts of his program in disarray, Chamberlain focused his attention on the land reform issue. His proposals centered on a bill prepared by Jesse Collings to give local authorities powers to take land by compulsion and create allotments and small holdings for agricultural laborers. Chamberlain felt he must strengthen the issue's appeal among Liberal candidates. In his Victoria Hall speech on September 24, he broadened the issue

---

Joseph Chamberlain, October 24, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/54/648.

[16]Howard, "Unauthorized Programme", EHR, p. 486. Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism, pp. 28-32. William E. Gladstone to Joseph Chamberlain, November 6, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/34/44.

to include reform of local government. The next local government bill, he declared, could include a provision which gave elected local authorities "the power to acquire land compulsorily--at its fair value, for public purposes, and among these public purposes I have laid great stress upon the letting of land for allotments and small holdings."[17]

Local government reform had received widespread support in the campaign. The leaders of both parties endorsed it. But, until his Victoria Hall speech, Chamberlain showed no great enthusiasm for it. He had endorsed it in general terms and had included it in the Radical Programme, but he had not linked it to the land issue, and did not press it on its own merits.

Lord Salisbury tried to assert Conservative interest in the local government issue, without Chamberlain's additions. Speaking at Newport on October 7, he argued that local autonomy was historically a Tory principle. The chief issues in local government, he felt, were decentralization, inequities in local rates, and liquor licensing. In his remarks, Salisbury reflected a Conservative county councils bill which Arthur Balfour, President of the Local Government Board, was preparing at that time. Salisbury did not intend to let the Liberals have the issue free

---

[17]Joseph Chamberlain at Victoria Hall, London, September 24, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, 1:213.

and clear.[18]

On the local government issue, Salisbury faced a more effective foe than Chamberlain. Dilke wrote to Chamberlain that he was going to strike at Salisbury's exploitation of local government. At Halifax on October 13, Dilke gave a detailed exposition of his local government bill, with a wealth of detail which bewildered his listeners. His speech was equivalent to publishing his local government bill, the course of action he had suggested to Gladstone in 1884. The Conservatives would now be forced to justify any less complete bill. Also, Dilke's ideas had advanced beyond his bill. He now wished to add another level to rural local government, restoring the parish meeting as the base of the entire system. He suggested that the parish have some powers over Poor Law overseers, parochial charities, commons and recreation grounds, and valuation. He also endorsed Chamberlain's proposals to give district and parish authorities power to take land for allotments and small holdings.[19]

Dilke's speech threw the mantle of local government reform over Chamberlain's land purchase proposals. Henceforth in the campaign, they were linked. Chamberlain was to consider the election a mandate to carry out both reforms.

---

[18]Lord Salisbury at Newport, October 7, 1885, The Times, October 8, 1885, p. 7. County Councils Bill, January 23, 1886, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/359-543.

[19]Sir Charles Dilke at Halifax, October 13, 1885, The Times, October 14, 1885, p. 7. Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, October 8, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/24/138.

The results of the general election reversed earlier patterns of electoral support for the Liberal and Conservative parties. The Conservatives won a small majority in the English boroughs, and did best in the large boroughs which had been divided by the Redistribution Act. Their strongest areas were London and Lancashire. They won thirty-three seats in London to the Liberals' twenty-six. In the other eleven English boroughs which had been divided, they won thirty seats to the Liberals' twenty. Only in Birmingham were they prevented from winning any seats. To offset their gains, the Liberals won 133 seats in the English counties, to the Conservatives' 110. A minority of Liberal victories in the counties were actually in rural divisions. Many of them were dominated by formerly independent boroughs which had voted Liberal. But, forty-three of the Liberal county divisions were agricultural. In some of them, Liberal landlords or Nonconformist farmers gave the Liberals their victory. But, in many, Jesse Collings and Joseph Arch won the votes of the agricultural laborers. Most of the Liberal victories in rural county divisions were concentrated in East Anglia and southwest England.[20]

---

[20]James Cornford, "The Transformation of Conservatism in the Late Nineteenth Century", Victorian Studies, 7 (September, 1963):53. Figures are calculated from Frederick McCalmont, McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book: British Election Results, 1832-1918, 3th ed., edited by J. Vincent and M. Stenton (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971), and Henry Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910 (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1967).

The resulting party balance in the House of Commons was a standoff. 335 Liberals exactly balanced 249 Conservatives and eighty-six Irish Nationalists. No party could govern alone. Parnell could form a governing alliance with the Liberals, but not the Conservatives. The Radicals emerged as a strong group within the Liberal party, just slightly less than half of the parliamentary Liberals. The bulk of them represented constituencies in large boroughs and industrial counties, though twenty-five represented rural county divisions.[21]

The Radical success did not benefit Chamberlain. Though he was credited with the Liberal victory in the counties, he was blamed for the losses in the towns. Gladstone expressed a widely held opinion when he commented that the causes of the Liberal defeats were "Fair Trade + Parnell + Church + Chamberlain", in that order of importance. Collings's program had been humorously dubbed "Three acres and a cow." In the aftermath, Chamberlain wrote to Harcourt that "We are dreadfully in need of an urban 'Cow'. . . . The boroughs do not care for our present programme and I confess I do not know what substitute to offer them."[22]

---

[21]McCalmont, Parliamentary Poll Book, part I, p. 332b. T. W. Heyck, The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland, 1874-95 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), pp. 247-52.

[22]William E. Gladstone to Lord Richard Grosvenor, November 27, 1885, quoted in Barker, Gladstone and Radicalism, p. 25. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir William Harcourt, Decem-

The election of 1885 exposed the contradictions in Chamberlainite Radicalism. It relied for its support upon middle class Nonconformist leaders. Chamberlain's efforts to seek working class support alienated many middle class voters. But, Nonconformity was an even weaker reed. Redistribution destroyed Nonconformist control in many large boroughs. The issues which attracted them alienated many Anglicans. The Radical Programme was a dead end. Most of its proposals were later implemented by the Conservatives, shorn of the very points which made them attractive to most Radicals. As instruments of middle class and Nonconformist ambition, they were failures.

Chamberlain's attack upon the citadels of aristocratic power and privilege came to an end in the election of 1885. He was already moderating his attack a month before the polling commenced. The Liberal losses in the towns deprived him of the Liberal victory he had predicted and led others to expect. The divergence between expectation and result, and his disorientation at being unable to find an urban "cow", left him in a weakened position. He quietly dropped his attempts to set conditions on entry into the Cabinet. He was not the only leader who was weakened: Hartington's faction also did not do well in the elections. This opened the way for Gladstone's attempt to convert the Liberal party to Home Rule.

---

ber 6, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/38/146.

iii

Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule was announced by his son Herbert in the famous "Hawarden kite" on December 16. The Irish issue had loomed over the election. Parnell's willingness to sell his support to the highest bidder cost the Liberals dearly. He ordered the Irish in England to vote for the Conservatives, which cost the Liberals an estimated forty seats. During the same period, Gladstone reassessed his position on Ireland and came to the conclusion that it was a great question which must be solved by his usual methods of moral leadership. He made no secret of his interest in the question. When warned of Gladstone's intentions, Chamberlain was not worried. He thought that a deal with Parnell was impossible, and that "Mr. G's plans will come to naught." [23]

He was unprepared for the widespread Radical support which Gladstone received after the Hawarden kite. Most Radicals decided that the bill was necessary to remove the Irish issue from English politics and clear the road for their own reforms. Even the faithful Jesse Collings rejected Chamberlain's objections to Gladstone's schemes, arguing that they were mere points of detail. Morley publicly de-

---

[23]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, pp. 105-20. Henry Labouchere to Joseph Chamberlain, October 18, 1885, Joseph Chamberlain to Henry Labouchere, October 20, 1885, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/50/28, 29.

clared his support for Gladstone's position. Chamberlain found few allies for his proposal to leave the Conservatives in power while forcing them to pass Liberal measures. Throughout January, 1886, he found many of his longtime supporters drifting into Gladstone's orbit.[24]

Seeking to head off the Home Rule bill, he tried to focus Liberal interest on the allotments issue. On January 11, 1886, he addressed the second annual meeting of Collings's Allotments and Small Holdings Association. He argued that land reform was urgent, and that a bill must be put before Parliament soon in order to assure the Liberal party continued support from the agricultural laborers. He was outmaneuvered: Gladstone used the allotments issue to unseat the Conservatives on January 26, and then dropped it.[25]

Powerless to halt the Liberal drift, Chamberlain agreed to serve under Gladstone on the formula that the Cabinet would simply investigate the issue of Home Rule. After some difficult negotiations, he accepted the Presidency of the Local Government Board. It was another junior post, but it gave him a role in domestic politics.

His position gave Chamberlain another opportunity

---

[24]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, pp. 109-11, 120-25. David Aronson, "Jesse Collings, Agrarian Radical, 1880-1892", Ph. D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts/Amherst, 1975, p. 91.

[25]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", pp. 91-99.

to try to stop the Liberal rush to Home Rule. He secured Cabinet permission to draft a local government bill, and constituted a committee to prepare it. Chamberlain was the only Cabinet member on the committee. The other members were Dilke, Collings (now Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board), Hugh Owen (the Board's Permanent Secretary), Henry Thring and Herbert Jenkyns (Parliamentary Counsel to the Treasury and his assistant). Dilke, who was out of the Cabinet, usually acted as chairman.[26] Dilke and Thring did most of the work. Chamberlain confessed that "I have been so full of work that at present I have been able to get no grasp of the subject and hardly know where to begin or what difficulties to meet." [27] Undisturbed by political conflicts, the committee rapidly drafted a bill.

Chamberlain's local government bill was the most comprehensive measure of the entire series of local government bills. Only the government of London was excluded from its scope. It established parish, district and county councils, incorporated Collings's allotments bill, and attempted to solve the difficult problem of liquor licensing. Chamber-

---

[26]The scandal which destroyed Dilke's career had not yet become public, but it was known in political circles and he was excluded when Gladstone assembled his Cabinet. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43940, ff. 119-20.

[27]Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, February 13, 1886, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43888, ff. 10-11.

lain did not write the bill, he coordinated it. He was more interested that there be a bill than he was in what was in it. The ideas were Dilke's, with some additions from Collings, and a legal check from Thring.[28]

The core of the bill was Dilke's bill of 1884. It established county councils, but the key institution of local government was to be the district council, created from existing urban and rural sanitary authorities. All councils were to consist entirely of elected representatives, probably all elected at the same time. The poor law was included, probably on the same basis as in Dilke's bill. Rates were divided between owners and occupiers, and the system of assigned revenues was preserved.

To this core was added provision for parish government,

---

[28]Chamberlain's local government bill has been lost. It was never submitted to the Cabinet, and there is no copy of it in the Public Record Office, or in the Chamberlain or Dilke papers. However, it can be largely reconstructed from the following sources. Joseph Chamberlain, A Political Memoir, 1880-1892, ed. C. H. D. Howard, (London: Batchwood Press, 1953), p. 193. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43940, ff. 125-26. The London Daily News, March 15, 1886, p. 4. Sir Charles Dilke at Halifax, October 13, 1885, The Times, October 14, 1885, p. 7. Sir Charles Dilke to the Thirteenth Annual Poor Law Conference, December 9, 1885, Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1885, p. 6. Collings's bill for allotments and smallholdings, Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1886 (Sess. I), 1:17-42. Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, February 25, 1886, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43888, f. 22. Joseph Chamberlain, "Alliance Dept. March 3/86", Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/5/3/3. Dawson Burns to Joseph Chamberlain, March 16, 1886, March 19, 1886, Joseph Chamberlain to Dawson Burns, March 18, 1886, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/5/3/4, 6, 5.

as outlined in Dilke's speeches of 1885. The ancient parish Vestry was to be democratized and given corporate status. It was given powers to appoint Overseers of the Poor and other parish officers, supervise boards for highways, baths and washhouses, and watching and lighting. It could let and manage parochial charity lands, control commons and recreation grounds, and lease allotments.

The allotments and small holdings provisions were taken from Collings's bill. Local authorities were given powers to take land on purchase or lease, including compulsory purchase. They could improve land belonging to them, sell superfluous lands, divide land into allotments or small holdings, sell or lease them, and make loans to smallholders for improvements.[29]

The clauses on liquor licensing were taken from Dilke's bill and from the bill prepared for the Conservatives by Arthur Balfour. The bill gave liquor licensing powers to district councils, and provided for compensation if the licenses were terminated. Compensation was to be paid out of license fees received from the remaining licensees.

Chamberlain hoped to use his bill to provide an alternative to Home Rule. But, he quickly discovered the disadvantages of opposing the legislative program of a deter-

---

[29]Collings's bill defined an allotment as one acre of arable or three acres of pasture, which was to be leased (clause 3). A small holding was to be from one to forty acres, and was to be purchased (clause 36).

mined Prime Minister. According to Treasury regulations, no government bill could be drafted without Thring. On March 4, Gladstone pulled him off the local government bill to draft the Home Rule bill. Chamberlain was too angry to come to the House of Commons, so Dilke went to his home and "held with him an important conversation as to his future." He could not talk Chamberlain out of his opposition to the Home Rule bill.[30]

On March 15, the leading article of London's most important Liberal newspaper, the Daily News, carried a full description of the bill. The article commented that it was fortunate that the bill was in the hands of someone of Chamberlain's experience in local government, and expressed the hope that it could be introduced in the current session. Chamberlain's trial balloon did not work. The only response was a protest from Dawson Burns, London representative of the United Kingdom Alliance over the liquor licensing provisions. The Cabinet crisis over Home Rule quickly came to a head, and on March 26, Chamberlain resigned and went into public opposition.[31]

After two months of maneuvering, Chamberlain, in alliance with the Conservatives and Lord Hartington's Whigs, helped

---

[30]Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43940, ff. 125-26.

[31]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, pp. 130-31. Daily News, March 15, 1886, p. 4. Dawson Burns to Joseph Chamberlain, March 16, 1886, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/5/3/4.

to defeat the Home Rule bill on its Second Reading. Of the ninety-three Liberals who voted against the bill, thirty-two were Radicals.[32]

The crisis shook Chamberlain's power to its foundations. He was almost driven out of politics altogether. Only careful maneuvering and his reputation kept him from being repudiated by the Birmingham Liberal Association. The organization was held together behind Chamberlain, but Schnadhorst and many other Birmingham Liberals supported Gladstone. Though the organization remained formally undivided, there was a real split which remained to trouble him in the future.[33]

He lost control of the National Liberal Federation to Schnadhorst and Gladstone. Upon call of the officers, the General Committee of the Federation met in London on May 5. It was attended by an unprecedented number of delegates. James Kitson, the president, opposed Chamberlain, so William Harris presented the officers' resolution. It declared support for Gladstone and the Home Rule bill, but requested that he accept Chamberlain's amendments. The strategem was defeated, and the meeting overwhelmingly voted for an amendment declaring the Federation's unabated confidence in Gladstone. Six officers resigned. The power of the Birmingham group over the Federation was broken, and Chamber-

---

[32]Heyck, Dimensions of British Radicalism, p. 253.

[33]Michael Hurst, Joseph Chamberlain and West Midland Politics, 1886-1895, Occasional Paper of the Dugdale Society, No. 15 (Oxford: Vivian Ridler, 1962), pp. 11-35.

lain's organizational base shrank to his own city. His loss of the National Liberal Federation destroyed his position in the Liberal party. It was probably the most important event in the entire contest over Home Rule.[34]

iv

Chamberlain's opposition to the Home Rule bill divorced him from most of his Radical supporters. They soon became his bitterest enemies. After ten years as a Radical leader and a vigorous effort to turn the Radicals into the dominant faction within the Liberal party, he was driven out of the party. When the Radicals were given a clear choice between Chamberlain's leadership and Gladstone's, they chose Gladstone. Almost all of Chamberlain's leading Radical supporters outside of Birmingham deserted him. Even Collings did not come out against Home Rule until after he had been very badly treated by the Liberals.[35]

Chamberlainite Radicalism was distinguished from Radicalism in general only by the fact that Chamberlain led it. Its doctrinal peculiarities were due to Chamberlain's idiosyncrasies. From 1876 to 1886, he had no effective rivals for the Radical leadership. Gladstone led the Radicals at

---

[34]R. S. Watson, The National Liberal Federation (London: T. F. Unwin, 1907), pp. 54-57. A. T. Bassett, The Life of the Rt. Hon. John Edward Ellis, M.P. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1914), pp. 74-77.

[35]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", pp. 103-09.

some times, but generally he tried to preserve a position above the Liberal factions. But, 1886 was the first time since 1877 that Chamberlain openly and directly opposed Gladstone on a major issue. Few Radicals cared to follow him. His fall was the fall of Chamberlainite Radicalism. He retained his influence in Radical circles only so long as he actively led them, and he had little permanent impact upon Radicalism.

The election of 1885 severely damaged the local basis of Chamberlain's politics. The division of the great towns into several constituencies destroyed their influence in Parliament. Chamberlain could no longer assemble a coalition of communities to advance his interests in national politics. Parliamentary districts more clearly reflected class divisions, which gave an advantage to political coalitions based upon class interest. Localism was not a negligable force, but the politics of class made steady headway, and issues were nationalized. Chamberlain was forced to accomodate himself to the new political patterns.

Chamberlain's coalition with the Conservatives changed his vantage point in politics. In the years after 1886, he found that his formulations worked as well in a Tory context as a Radical one. They were used to a different purpose, for he had moved from the attack in social politics to the defense.

P A R T I I I

1 8 8 6 - 1 8 9 5 : D E F E N S E

Joseph Chamberlain did not sit in the Cabinet again until 1895. For the first three years after he helped to to defeat the Home Rule bill, he was principally concerned with surviving as a national political leader. He faced a difficult task. Lord Salisbury was a bitter enemy who thought little of Chamberlain's value to the Unionist coalition. Lord Randolph Churchill, upon whom Chamberlain relied to secure concessions for the Radical Unionists, suddenly fell from power at the end of 1886. An attempt at Liberal reunion failed, and Schnadhorst tried to break his control of Birmingham. Only slowly did he win Salisbury's respect and re-establish the security of his base in Birmingham. It was not until 1889 that he could resume his role as an important voice in national politics.

Chamberlain rapidly asserted himself as a creative defender of the status quo. 1889 was the year of the London dock strike. The New Unionism was a stimulus to Chamberlain similar to that of Henry George seven years earlier. Determined to present an alternative to class-based politics, he came forward with new proposals for social legislation: old age pensions, and workmen's compensation and employers' liability. Significantly, his new proposals did not have the localistic basis of his old ones; they were to be administered by the state.

In 1895, fully established in his own party, Chamberlain joined in the Conservative attack upon the London County Council. The Progressive party were heirs of his own accomplishments in Birmingham. In attacking them, Chamberlain rejected his own past. Shortly afterwards, Chamberlain turned to Imperialism, and localism ceased to have much importance in his career.

C H A P T E R V I I

THE UNIONIST COALITION

At its inception, the Unionist coalition was an unlikely alliance. The only common ground between Salisbury's Conservatives, Hartington's Liberal Unionists and Chamberlain's Radical Unionists, was a commitment to maintaining the union between Great Britain and Ireland. That uneasy coalition only slowly became a party. In order to maintain their political viability, the Liberal and Radical Unionists had to prove that they were still Liberals as well as Unionists. To do this, they tried to secure concessions from the Conservative government. Salisbury and his colleagues were disinclined to make such concessions and only slowly saw the need for them. Eventually, there was some success, and by 1889, Chamberlain was claiming that Salisbury was implementing the unauthorized programme.

Localism entered into the consolidation of the Unionist coalition. As always, Chamberlain judged the rest of the world by the state of his power base in Birmingham. That base was not fully secure again until 1889. Only after that did he feel fully confident in embracing Salisbury. Localism as it related to local government reform was also part of the process. It gave Chamberlain a series of issues upon which he could seek concessions from the Conservatives,

or to claim that he had won them. Through a combination of political organization and seeking concessions, Chamberlain thoroughly entrenched himself in the Unionist coalition.

i

Party organization was the foundation of Joseph Chamberlain's continued political power in the late 1880s and 1890s. He was able to become a powerful and respected leader within the Unionist coalition only after he rebuilt his political base in Birmingham. That base was in doubt for two years after the Home Rule crisis. The Birmingham Liberal Association did not split during the crisis, and Chamberlain shared power with Schnadhorst, secretary of the National Liberal Federation. There was little opportunity to appeal to the voters on the issue, and their attitude was unknown. On a national level, Chamberlain kept his own organization, the National Radical Union, distinct from the Liberal Unionist party, despite its formal affiliation with Lord Hartington's organization.[1]

In national politics, Chamberlain was in an extremely difficult political position. The loss of the National Liberal Federation and his repudiation by the bulk of parliamentary Radicals left him with only a tenuous claim to

---

[1]Michael Hurst, Joseph Chamberlain and West Midland Politics, 1886-1895, Occasional Paper of the Dugdale Society, No. 15 (Oxford: Vivian Ridler, 1962), pp. 35-43.

be a national political leader. Lord Salisbury only tolerated him because Lord Hartington and Lord Randolph Churchill considered him important to the Unionist cause. Hartington needed Chamberlain to preserve his own independence from Salisbury, while Churchill tried to use him to force the Cabinet to accept Tory Democracy. Churchill so freely used Chamberlain's name in the Cabinet that Salisbury took umbrage at "his friendship for Chamberlain which made him insist that we should accept that statesman as our guide in internal politics." [2]

Almost as soon as Chamberlain entered the Unionist coalition, local government reform emerged as an issue around which the terms of that alliance were to be defined. Chamberlain preferred to postpone local government reform. He wrote to Lord Hartington that an Irish land bill was the best issue for the Unionists to press, in order to prove that their Irish stand was not merely negative. But, Churchill selected the issue as one he could win concessions with. On October 7, 1886, Chamberlain left for an extended vacation in Greece and Turkey, carrying with him Churchill's assurances that the government's program would be acceptable to the Radicals.[3]

---

[2]Lord Salisbury to Sir Fitzjames Stephen, December 30, 1886, quoted in Lady Gwendolin Cecil, Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury, 4 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922-32), 3:336-37.

[3]Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Hartington, August

Though many Conservatives opposed local government reform, party leaders regarded it as inevitable, and Lord Salisbury was pledged to it. Accordingly, C. T. Ritchie, President of the Local Government Board, set to work on a measure as soon as he entered office. On November 12, he presented a memorandum outlining a bill to establish county and district councils, with metropolitan London to be a county. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the Irish Chief Secretary, took exception to Ritchie's omission of special representation for landowners. He worried about the economic impact of the new rating system, and about the precedents for Ireland.[4]

Most of the Cabinet discussion centered on a proposal, adopted from Dilke's bill, to give administration of the Poor Law to the district councils. Many Conservatives agreed with Salisbury that this would be "rather like leaving the cat in charge of the cream jug." Churchill held out for a comprehensive measure, along the lines of Chamberlain's bill, but was isolated in the Cabinet. He represented Chamberlain's position as the demand of all

---

1, 1886, September 7, 1886, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/22/121, 123. Joseph Chamberlain, A Political Memoir, 1880-1892, ed. C. H. D. Howard (London: Batchwood Press, 1953), pp. 231-33.

[4]C. T. Ritchie, "Memorandum on Local Government", November 12, 1886, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/549-71. Winston Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill, 2 vols. (London: Odhams Press, 1906), 2:223-25.

Liberal Unionists. On November 25, Salisbury met with Hartington, only to find that the Liberal Unionist leader agreed with Beach's position that inclusion of the Poor Law should entail ex-officio representation on the councils. Hartington was mainly interested in an Irish local government bill, citing Chamberlain's arguments in favor of giving Irish legislation priority.[5]

On November 29, Salisbury informed Beach that Churchill had agreed to a compromise. Irish local government would be promised in the Queen's speech after English and Scottish. The initial English bill would be limited to county councils, which would contain some co-opted members. Owners would pay half the rates upon expiration of existing contracts. The county council would share control of the police with the Justices. Churchill's budget would make some provision for aiding local rates. Beach agreed to the compromise, and Hartington agreed to drop his demand for an immediate Irish bill.[6]

The bill now moved rapidly. Draft election and financial clauses were settled on December 13: one-third of the council members would be appointed, and the system of assigned revenues would be implemented, though none of the

---

[5]J. P. D. Dunbabin, "The Politics of the Establishment of County Councils", Historical Journal, 6 (1963):241-43.

[6]ibid., p. 243. Michael Hurst, Joseph Chamberlain and the Liberal Reunion: The Round Table Conference of 1887 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 81.

income tax would be diverted. Churchill set aside money in his budget for the reform.[7]

When Chamberlain returned to London on December 13, he found the old Conservatives very obviously in charge of the situation. In a speech on December 8, Salisbury declared that "the Conservatives are as conservative as ever," an obvious slap at Tory Democracy. On December 15, Walter Long, Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, spoke at Melksham on the government's idea of local government reform. The new county councils, he said, would represent "all interests connected with the land," and would give the wealthy power to prevent "wanton extravagance of public money." [8]

Chamberlain was furious. Birmingham was divided over the government's Irish policy, and the obvious conservatism of the contemplated local government bill made his position even more difficult. It was publicly obvious that Chamberlain was having no influence on the Conservatives.

Through Churchill, he pressed for concessions on the principle of representation in the local government bill. Salisbury refused to implement a system without checks. George J. Goschen, who was present at the interview between

---

[7]Draft Election Clauses, Draft Financial Clauses, December 13, 1886, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/765-75, 770-85. Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill, 2:209-10.

[8]Hurst, Liberal Reunion, pp. 64, 90-91.

Churchill and Salisbury, suggested a compromise: that councils be fully representative, but that they be limited to a 4s rate. Churchill was willing to accept this compromise, but while Chamberlain saw no objection in principle, he thought it unlikely to carry the Cabinet. He replied that "if this is the Bill, we are unable to support it, unbelievable mischief will be done." Tory intransigence was liable to split apart the Unionist coalition.[9]

Churchill, who had hoped to use Chamberlain to strengthen his own hand, found himself caught between Chamberlain and Salisbury. He was insulted when Salisbury made petty objections to his proposals to aid local rates. On December 22, he resigned over a budget dispute with the service departments.[10]

Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was a bombshell. It destroyed his career and almost led to the fall of the government. Chamberlain concluded that "the reactionary party in the Cabinet had gained the upper hand" and made a speech holding out the olive branch to the Liberals.

---

[9]Memorandum sent to Chamberlain by Lord Rothschild, December 19, 1886, and Chamberlain's note of reply, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/5/5/1, 2. Goschen's proposed limitation was no real barrier to local expense at the time. Most counties did not exceed a 2s rate until after the First World War. Dunbabin, "Politics of County Councils", HJ, p. 246, n. 97. Lord Randolph Churchill to Joseph Chamberlain, December 19, 1886, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/14/26.

[10]Churchill, Lord Randolph Churchill, 2:232-34.

They responded favorably, and he spent three months negotiating with Harcourt and Morley at the Round Table Conference. But, Gladstone refused to give Chamberlain the kind of concession on Home Rule which would allow him to claim a victory and return to his former position as a leader in the Liberal party. So, the negotiations failed.[11]

Throughout 1887, Chamberlain struggled desperately to win some concessions from somebody. In July, he denounced the Conservatives and threatened to vote them out if they did not give way on details of the Irish land bill then before Parliament. Reluctantly, Salisbury made the necessary concessions, admitting that "it is the price we have to pay for the Union, and it is a heavy one." On August 26, Chamberlain and five other Birmingham M.P.s voted against the government on a resolution to condemn the government for its application of the Crimes Act to Ireland. With that action, Salisbury finally accepted Hartington's contention that Chamberlain must be brought fully into the Unionist coalition. On August 28, he telegraphed to the Queen that he was nominating Chamberlain as the chief commissioner to negotiate a new fisheries treaty with the United States. Chamberlain left for Washington in late October.

---

[11]Chamberlain, Political Memoir, pp. 233-70. Hurst, Liberal Reunion.

[12]J. L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, vol. 2: 1885-1895: Disruption and Combat (London: Macmillan and Company, 1934), pp. 303-07, 309-17. Dunbabin, "Politics of County Councils", HJ, pp. 239-40.

Chamberlain was not consulted on Ritchie's local government bill as it was revised repeatedly in 1887. Though the details altered, drafting proceeded upon the basis of the Salisbury-Churchill compromise of November 28, 1886. The financial clauses were in danger for a few months after Churchill's resignation, but were finally incorporated into the bill unchanged in April. The issue of representation was resolved by dropping the plan to divide rates between owners and occupiers. The municipal system would be applied to the counties: one fourth of the council members would be co-opted by their colleagues. District councils were to be weaker than in Dilke's and Chamberlain's bills: liquor licensing would be a county council power, and the Poor Law was left untouched.[13] The county council's power over the police was restricted by making the Watch Committee a joint committee of the county council and the Justices. The most controversial clauses granted compensation to liquor licensees if their licenses were withdrawn.[14]

In Washington, with his fisheries negotiations nearing conclusion, Chamberlain was anxious to find out where the government's decisions would leave him politically. On

---

[13]Dilke attacked the provisions for district councils when the bill was published. He criticised the exclusion of the Poor Law and parish government. Otherwise, the list of powers for district councils in Ritchie's bill compares closely with that in Dilke's.

[14]Draft Bills, Public Record Office, HLG 29/18/547-1225.

January 13, 1888, he wrote to Salisbury, expressing his "earnest hope that the English Local Govt. Bill will practically establish in Counties the same institutions that have worked so well in the Towns". Salisbury replied that "we have acceded to your views on the County Govt. Bill to a great extent", and described the bill's provisions for representation, police, poor law, and rates. The bill contained the minimum Chamberlain needed to claim success: acknowledgement of the principle of representation. As long as the constitution of county government was at least as democratic as that of the borough, his political position was viable. He replied, "What you tell me about the Local Govt. Bill relieves me from a great anxiety. I should be prepared to go further in the direction of local control, but I recognize the necessity of compromise under existing circs." [15]

Chamberlain gave the local government bill his full support when it came before Parliament. He based his support on the fact that the bill extended the municipal system to the counties. He criticized the omission of the Poor Law and parish government, and asked that the police provisions be amended in committee. He supported the system

---

[15] Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Salisbury, January 13, 1888, quoted in Dunbabin, "Politics of County Councils", HJ, p. 250. Lord Salisbury to Joseph Chamberlain, February 1, 1888, Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Salisbury, February 16, 1888, Chamberlain Papers, JC 3/1/88, 29.

of co-opted members, pointing out that the boroughs had an identical system. His only criticism of the institution was semantic. He thought the name of Selected Councillors for the co-opted members was atrocious, and suggested that they be named aldermen, as in the boroughs. It was the only one of his suggestions that the government adopted.[16]

Though the Liberals made no effort to attack the bill as a party issue, there was opposition to specific sections. The bill was debated in committee through twenty-two sessions, and the section on district councils had to be abandoned for want of time. Chamberlain supported the government throughout, even when he came under attack from temperance organizations.[17]

The bill passed with government pledges that district and parish government would be reformed in the next session, but no bill was introduced before the Liberals returned to office in 1892.

Chamberlain could claim that he had made the Conservatives concede representative government to the counties. But, he did not carry that point personally. Conservative political realism did it for him. Chamberlain won it when he won the franchise first debate. For, his position in

---

[16] 3 Hansard, 324:1353-68 (April 16, 1888).

[17] Dawson Burns to Joseph Chamberlain, April 17, 1888, C. T. Ritchie to Joseph Chamberlain, May 11, 1888, Chamberlain Papers, JC 6/5/3/7, 8.

1878 was correct: once the agricultural laborer could vote for Parliament, he could not be denied participation in local government. The Conservatives recognized this fact when they adopted the issue in 1885. With this point won, Chamberlain could afford to lose every other point, for he could still gain what was most essential to him.

ii

At the time the local government bill was passing through Parliament, Chamberlain was forced to fight for his political life in Birmingham. Schnadhorst took advantage of his five month absence in America to seize control of the organizations where Radicals and Radical Unionists coexisted. On February 15, 1888, the Allotments and Small Holdings Association deposed Jesse Collings from its presidency. In March, just as Chamberlain returned, Schnadhorst seized control of the Birmingham Liberal Association. He flooded the poorly attended ward meetings with his supporters. They elected new ward committees and extended their control level by level up the organizational structure.[18]

Chamberlain quickly recovered. The local government bill made life easier for all Liberal Unionists, and he quickly re-established his organizational base. Chamber-

---

[18]David Aronson, "Jesse Collings, Agrarian Radical, 1880-1892", Ph. D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts/ Amherst, 1975, pp. 133-34. Hurst, West Midland Politics, pp. 43-45

lain's supporters withdrew from the Liberal Association to found a rival Birmingham Liberal Unionist Association. In May, the new organization successfully supported a Conservative in a municipal by-election. Simultaneously, Chamberlain and Collings launched the Rural Labourer's League which, despite denials, was a political agency to win back the county divisions which Collings had delivered to the Liberals in 1885. John Bright's death in March, 1889 precipitated a succession crisis to his seat in Central Birmingham. Lord Randolph Churchill was still the official Conservative candidate, and local Conservatives pressed his name. Chamberlain was not prepared to allow a popular national figure into Birmingham, where he might easily become a rival. Churchill did not force the issue, and the Liberal Unionist Association nominated John Albert Bright to succeed his father. Bright's victory over a Liberal opponent, followed by Unionist victories in the municipal elections, re-solidified Chamberlain's regime in Birmingham.[19]

While he was stabilizing his base in Birmingham, Chamberlain also regularized his relations with Hartington and Salisbury. In March, 1889, he changed the name of the National Radical Union to the National Liberal Union. He agreed with Hartington and Salisbury that, instead of

---

[19]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", pp. 135-36. Hurst, West Midland Politics, pp. 6-7, 45-55.

being a rival national organization to Hartington's party, the Union would become the Liberal Unionists' regional organization in the West Midlands. Birmingham and the three surrounding counties sent thirty-nine representatives to Parliament. Henceforth, all Conservative and Liberal Unionist communications with constituency organizations in that area would go through Chamberlain. Influence was not control. Many local Conservatives were old enemies of Chamberlain, and a few defied him with impunity. But, Salisbury and Hartington consistently backed him in squabbles with constituency organizations. Chamberlain's electoral influence thus extended out from Birmingham in concentric rings. In Birmingham itself, he was paramount. In the West Midlands, he had a dominant voice, though he often had to fight to get his way. Outside of that area, he had influence in some constituencies, either directly or through Collings. How many votes he could add to the Unionist total in divisions across the country could not be calculated, but it was assumed to be significant in some areas.[20]

In his relations with the Conservatives, Chamberlain confined his pressure to private representations, while refusing to vote them out in Parliament. He did vote against them on a few occasions when private pressure did no good, but his attitude was realistic. In 1892, he admitted to

---

[20]Hurst, West Midland Politics, pp. 9, 57-72.

Arthur Balfour that "I have to expect to be refused three times out of four when I advocate a particular cause and hope to succeed the fourth time." [21]

Local government reform continued throughout the years when Chamberlain was re-establishing his political position. He was not a central figure in any of the reforms, but they afforded him an opportunity to press the Conservatives for concessions which would make it easier to sell Unionism to his Radical followers.

The Scottish local government bill gave him one of his greatest triumphs. The Scottish municipal system was more liberal than its English counterpart, and this was reflected in the provisions for county government. The bill included a provision for abolishing fees in Scottish elementary schools. Free education was never a controversial issue in Scotland, but English Conservatives opposed it for fear of the precedent. It was an obvious triumph for Chamberlain, and led to the extension of free education to English schools two years later.[22]

By mid-1889, Chamberlain felt he had been successful

---

[21] Arthur Balfour to Lord Salisbury, July 31, 1892, quoted in Hurst, West Midland Politics, p. 9.

[22] Scottish Office, Memoranda as to the Local Government (Scotland) Bill, March 15, 1889, March 29, 1889, Public Record Office, CAB 37/23/11, 15. Garvin, Chamberlain, 2: 419. P. W. Clayden, England Under the Coalition: The Political History of Great Britain and Ireland from the General Election of 1885 to May 1892 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), pp. 433-34, 470.

in winning concessions from the Conservatives. Such visible marks of his influence made it much easier for the Liberal Unionists to justify their existence to the voters. In July, 1889, he claimed that the Conservatives were implementing the unauthorized programme, after it had been misunderstood and rejected by the Liberals. He ticked off the points gained: local government reform, free education for Scotland, Collings's allotments bill, and a move toward graduated taxation in Goschen's death duties. He concluded that, "Under these circumstances, as a practical man, and as a practical reformer, I am perfectly satisfied." He reiterated this theme in many of his speeches. By 1891, Salisbury was privately requesting him not to do so, as it was embarrassing him with the Conservatives.[23]

But, after 1889, local government reform was one of Chamberlain's areas of least success. The government still had not introduced the promised parish and district councils bill, and the Liberals began to make an issue of it. Jesse Collings, who greatly desired the bill, even attacked the government in his newspaper, The Rural World. But, the Cabinet continued to postpone the bill session by session, arguing that time did not permit it. The Irish local government bill was postponed until electoral considerations

---

[23]Joseph Chamberlain at a dinner of the Liberal Union Club, Greenwich, July 31, 1889, Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches, ed. Charles W. Boyd, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 1:76-77. Hurst, West Midland Politics, p. 64, n. 2.

forced it forward in 1892. It contained so many restrictions that the Liberals and Nationalists denounced it as "a shabby, insolent, illusory half-measure." Only the Liberal Unionists strongly supported it, and Chamberlain protested the cumulative vote which protected landlords. The bill was withdrawn after the Second Reading.[24]

Chamberlain was generally successful in pressuring the Conservatives in those years, however. Free education, the Irish Land Purchase Act of 1891, and the Small Holdings Act of 1892, testified to his influence. Other events strengthened his position. In December, 1891, Lord Hartington's father died and Hartington was translated to the House of Lords as Duke of Devonshire. Chamberlain succeeded him as the Liberal Unionist leader in the House of Commons. Three months later, W. H. Smith died, and was succeeded as Conservative leader in the House of Commons by Arthur Balfour, Salisbury's nephew. Chamberlain and Balfour developed a close working relationship, and Balfour was an intermediary between Chamberlain and Salisbury.[25]

---

[24]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", p. 141. Lord Salisbury to the Queen, January 9, 1892, Public Record Office, CAB 41/22/9. Catherine Shannon, "The Ulster Liberal Unionists and Local Government Reform, 1885-98", Irish Historical Studies, 18 (March, 1973):417-419.

[25]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", pp. 163-67, 169. Elsie Gulley, Joseph Chamberlain and English Social Politics (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1926), pp. 143-45. Joseph Chamberlain to Lord Hartington, February 10, 1890, March 2, 1890, November 21, 1890, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/22/147, 148, 149.

iii

The general election of 1892 made clear the strength of Chamberlain's local party organization. The West Midland counties contravened the national trend toward the Liberals. In the first general test of his organization, Chamberlain held all of the seats in Birmingham and produced a net gain of two seats in the surrounding counties. As a result, he began to gain a reputation in Conservative circles as an electoral miracle worker.[26]

The Liberal victory in the election was based partly on the success among the rural laborers of their demand for parish and district councils. Once the obligatory Home Rule bill had passed the House of Commons, Henry Fowler, President of the Local Government Board, opened the debate on his local government bill.[27]

Fowler's bill was based closely on Chamberlain's bill. Urban and rural sanitary districts were to become the areas for the new district councils, which would absorb the powers of all existing ad hoc authorities except the Poor Law. Parishes in boroughs and urban districts would be abolished. Those in rural districts were to be governed by a parish council if they had over eight hundred inhabitants, and by a parish meeting if they were smaller. The election of Poor

---

[26]Hurst, West Midland Politics, p. 64.

[27]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", p. 169.

Law Guardians was to be popularized, and where boundaries were coterminous, the district councillors were to be the Guardians.[28]

Chamberlain took no general stand on the bill. It was impossible for him to oppose a bill which was so close to his own, and which the Liberal Unionists had demanded for many years. But, the Conservatives were incensed over the provision to transfer control of parochial charities to the parish councils, and many of them opposed the reform root and branch. On the other side, many Liberals such as Dilke considered the bill poorly drafted. They were responsible for over one-third of the fourteen hundred amendments given notice of. Dilke proposed to Chamberlain that they cooperate to strengthen the bill.[29]

In debate, Chamberlain objected to being listed among the bill's opponents, but he supported the Conservative attack on the parochial charities clause. He also supported a Conservative amendment to retain ex-officio representation on Boards of Guardians. But, he opposed his own party on allotments, fully supporting Fowler's position that fair compensation should be given for compulsory purchase, and no more. He did some partisan quibbling on

---

[28]H. H. Fowler, "Parish Councils Bill", March 14, 1893, Public Record Office, CAB 37/33/27.

[29]Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, November, 1893, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/24/93.

technicalities. He intervened on other issues to support Dilke, but for the most part, his contributions were narrow, technical, idiosyncratic and inconsistent.[30]

Chamberlain made his chief contribution to the local government bill behind the scenes when it ran into trouble in the House of Lords. As the bill left Commons, Chamberlain advised Salisbury that the Lords "should deal tenderly with the Parish Councils Bill", because of the explosive electoral implications if they gave the Liberals an excuse to withdraw it. The Lords mutilated the bill anyway. Convinced that Salisbury was embarking on a dangerous course, Chamberlain and Devonshire pressured him to moderate his position. In two issues of The Rural World, Collings publicly warned the Lords not to oppose the allotments clauses. At a meeting on February 12, the Liberal Unionist leaders warned Salisbury that they could not support the Lords' action. Chamberlain opened negotiations with Fowler in an effort to keep the bill alive. In concert with Fowler, Chamberlain helped shepherd the bill through, as it travelled back and forth between the Houses three times. At one

---

[30] 4 Hansard, 19:150-51 (November 30, 1893); 281-87 (December 1, 1893); 502-04 (December 5, 1893); 586-90 (December 6, 1893); 674-76, 682-83, 739-43 (December 7, 1893); 862, 888-94 (December 8, 1893). 4 Hansard, 20:278-81, 307-08 (December 27, 1893). 4 Hansard, 21: 548-58 (February 15, 1894); 639-41 (February 16, 1894); 745-46, 773-76 (February 19, 1894); 1075-76, 1096-97 (February 26, 1894).

point he bluntly warned the Conservatives of the electoral consequences of opposing the allotments clauses. On March 5, the bill finally became law.[31]

iv

The Local Government Act of 1894 ended the issue of rural local government reform for both Chamberlain and the country. Though the parish councils disappointed Radicals, there was no further general reform of English local government until 1929. Only the government of London was an outstanding issue. The establishment of the London County Council in 1888 left the constitution of the metropolitan vestries untouched, and the Act of 1894 made only minor changes in them. All parties agreed that further reform was necessary, and Chamberlain challenged the Liberal government to pursue it. The issue was surrounded by political and economic considerations, which brought Chamberlain forward as a leading opponent of the London County Council within a few months of his success on the local government bill.[32]

---

[31]Aronson, "Jesse Collings", pp. 187-88. Devonshire to Joseph Chamberlain, February 9, 1894, February 14, 1894, February 19, 1894, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/22/77, 78, 80. Joseph Chamberlain to Henry Fowler, February 7, 1894, Henry Fowler to Joseph Chamberlain, February 9, 1894, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/31/13, 6. Joseph Chamberlain to Henry Fowler, February 10, 1894, quoted in Edith H. Fowler, The Life of Henry Hartley Fowler, First Viscount Wolverhampton (London: Hutchinson and Company, 1912), p. 272. 4 Hansard, 21:555 (February 15, 1894).

[32]4 Hansard, 21:618-23 (February 19, 1894).

C H A P T E R V I I I

"THE TRUE SPHERE OF MUNICIPAL ACTIVITY IS LIMITED"

By 1889, Joseph Chamberlain's political situation had stabilized sufficiently for him to attend to social politics again. Though his position as a national leader was secure, he was still searching for a new role in British politics. He was valued for his appeal to working-class voters, but there was no room for a Radical of his type in the Unionist coalition. He was forced to redefine his positions on a number of issues. The growth of English socialism and of trade unions in the late 1880s polarized English politics in a new way. Representatives of the propertied classes were concerned about the threat of collectivism--a vague term designating ideologies and political programs which promised to use government power (national or municipal) to redistribute wealth. From an advanced Radical who flirted with the label of socialist,[1] Chamberlain became a vociferous critic of socialism, especially as it was applied to municipal government. In this action, he refused to recognize his own children, for the Fabians and London Progressives drew much of their in-

---

[1] Joseph Chamberlain at Sheffield, September 25, 1873, Birmingham Daily Post, September 26, 1873, p. 6.

spiration and program from Chamberlain's term as Mayor of Birmingham. He leaned heavily on his reputation as a municipal reformer in the early 1890s, to criticize socialism and advance the Unionist cause. Before he abandoned the local government issue in 1895, he had set his face against contemporary municipal reform, and with it much of his localism.

i

The alienation of labor from the Liberal party, which Chamberlain had tried to prevent in the early 1880s, was accelerated by the Home Rule crisis. To many English working class leaders, the Home Rule issue was simply a diversion of Liberal energies away from legislation they considered vital. The advocates of working class representation in Parliament began to couple their cause with a demand that such representatives be independent of the existing parties. An independent Labour party needed participation of the trades unions, because working class representatives could not afford to pay for campaigning and could not support themselves while sitting in Parliament.

The growth of political awareness in the unions was closely associated with a more militant attitude toward labor negotiations. It was also promoted by the rise of English socialism, though it had broader roots. These

new attitudes, with their implications of one generation of leaders succeeding another, were called the New Unionism.

In 1887, the new movement began to surface. At the Trades Union Congress that autumn, J. Keir Hardie, the Scottish labor leader, attacked Henry Broadhurst, M.P., the chairman of the T. U. C.'s Parliamentary Committee. Broadhurst fought off the attack, but not all of his supporters were against the New Unionism. In 1888, Hardie refused an offer from Schnadhorst of a Liberal candidature in order to stand as an independent Labour candidate.[2]

The New Unionism became a public issue very suddenly in August, 1889 during the London dock strike. The strikers drew widespread popular support, and sparked an epidemic of trade union organizing. The movement spread rapidly in a period of relative prosperity, and the unions showed new militancy until the onset of depression in 1893. Socialists dominated the organizing effort, though they did not push socialist programs for fear of alienating non-socialist workers.[3]

---

[2]A. E. P. Duffy, "New Unionism in Britain, 1889-1890: A Reappraisal", Economic History Review, 2nd. series, 14 (December, 1961):306-19.

[3]Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), pp. 62-69, 78-98. Paul Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London, 1885-1914 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), pp. 45-61.

The New Unionism faced Chamberlain with the threat that an independent Labour party would destroy the basis of his politics by reinforcing the politics of class. It also gave him an opportunity to play on the alienation of labor leaders from the Liberal Associations.

He experimented with a new approach toward Labour in an article published in an American journal in May, 1891. The article bore the title, "Favorable Aspects of State Socialism". Chamberlain started from the argument that the industrial revolution had impoverished the working class, but he strongly emphasised the rise in working class living standards since 1840. This improvement, he held, was due to socialistic legislation, such as the Factory Acts, the Allotments Act, the Education Act, and the Poor Law. Much remained to be accomplished, he admitted, but it could be done if politicians would continue a policy which has been shown to afford practical results." [4]

Chamberlain presented his complete political program to an English audience in "The Labour Question", published in the Nineteenth Century in November, 1892. The article surveyed the congeries of groups professing to speak for labor. Two of them, the Manchester School and the old trade unionists, had been superseded. Two more, the Marxists

---

[4]Joseph Chamberlain, "Favorable Aspects of State Socialism", North American Review, 152 (May, 1891):534-48.

and the Anarchists, were not a political force in Britain. He concentrated most of his fire on the fifth group, the new unionists. He found them intolerant and their political program a definite threat, however moderate their immediate demands. Noting the new unionists' factionalism and petty jealousies, he questioned the movement's staying power in the growing depression. Its principal legacy, he felt, would be to stimulate further organization among the employers. The sixth group, the state or municipal socialists, overlapped most of the other categories. State socialism (in which he included municipal socialism) could not be rejected completely. "Its proposals must be examined separately on their merits, and with due regard to the circumstances of the time." [5]

Having assigned himself the position of choosing among labor's demands, Chamberlain then assumed his most judicial mien for the examination. Some proposals, such as paying Members of Parliament and amending the law of conspiracy, he rejected. To others, principally the eight hour day, he offered the type of intricate compromise between labor and the Tories that only a Liberal Unionist could like. He treated municipal socialism cautiously, endorsing its aims, but warning of his objections to the London County Council's labor policy.[6]

---

[5]Joseph Chamberlain, "The Labour Question", Nineteenth Century, 32 (November, 1892):677-87, quote from p. 687.

[6]ibid., pp. 687-93.

Chamberlain's positive proposals in "The Labour Question" focused on two schemes: employers' liability and old age pensions. For the former, he outlined the approach which was to be his last major accomplishment in social legislation.[7] He suggested that the principle of liability which underlay the present law (which he had written while President of the Board of Trade), be abandoned in favor of the German system. Compensation would be given automatically for every employment-related injury. It would be paid for by contributions from both capital and labor.[8]

The clarity of this scheme, which employers were willing to accept, contrasted with the half-measures he suggested for old age pensions. Any scheme must be voluntary, he insisted, and must be confined to persons in receipt of regular wages. Pensions would start at age sixty-five, and would carry no stigma of pauperism. The state might contribute some money to encourage workers to join the plan early in their adult life.[9]

---

[7]His principles were embodied in the Workmens' Compensation Act of 1897, which he piloted through the House of Commons.

[8]Chamberlain, "The Labour Question", Nineteenth Century, pp. 693-98.

[9]ibid., pp. 698-702. Chamberlain was forced to moderate his support for old age pensions because of opposition from the Friendly Societies. Joseph Chamberlain, "Old Age Pensions and Friendly Societies", National Review, 24 (January, 1895):592-615. The power of these hostile vested interests probably explains why Chamberlain consigned old age pensions to the indefinite future, while moving reasonably quickly to pass employers' liability.

His program, Chamberlain admitted, was not final or complete. However, the Liberals were committed to Home Rule and political reforms, and would have no time to legislate for labor. The working class, he argued, must look to the Tories, who had a history of passing social legislation.[10]

In the 1890s, Chamberlain's social politics had a new national ring. Old age pensions and employers' liability were to be administered by the central government. His politics were still the politics of community. The local community was no longer strong enough to hold the balance against the politics of class, so now he promoted the national community. Chamberlain's social politics of the early 1890s were therefore a step away from localism and a step toward Imperialism.

He took more direct action to turn his back on localism. In 1895, he joined the Conservative attack on the London County Council.

ii

The leaders of the London County Council in the 1890s were Chamberlain's heirs in many ways. They agreed with his distinctive contribution to English municipal reform: that a reforming party must maintain itself in power through

---

[10]Chamberlain, "The Labour Question", Nineteenth Century, pp. 707-10.

political organization. Party politics dominated the London County Council from the first. The reformers called themselves the Progressive party, uniting a predominant Liberal element with Radicals and socialists who avoided the Liberal label. They polarized the Council at the outset by electing eighteen of nineteen aldermen from their own supporters. The minority assumed the title of the Moderate party, though it did not fully organize until 1894.[11]

Chamberlain did not condemn the party structure of the London County Council. Initially, he made no objection to the Progressive party. They wished to elect Sir Charles Dilke as one of their Aldermen, and Chamberlain pressed him to take the post. Even after he soured on the Progressives, he defended party organization in local government. In 1898, he still urged the Moderates to "Make it a party fight, gentlemen", though they should take care that "when the elections are over that party questions are not heard of on the Council. That is a different thing altogether." [12]

---

[11] Sir Gwilym Gibbon and Reginald Bell, The History of the London County Council, 1889-1939 (London: Macmillan and Company, 1939), pp. 83-86. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour, pp. 77-81.

[12] Sir Charles Dilke to Joseph Chamberlain, September 27, 1888, October 3, 1888, Joseph Chamberlain to Sir Charles Dilke, September 30, 1888, October 3, 1888, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43888, ff. 142, 147-48, 144-45, 149. Sir Charles Dilke's Memoir, Dilke Papers, Add. Mss. 43941, ff. 98-100.

Chamberlain influenced the Progressives' program both directly and through the Fabian Socialists. Most councilmen, whether Progressive or Moderate, agreed that London must catch up the fifty years lead which the provincial towns had in municipal services. Birmingham, with its much publicized accomplishments, was a convenient standard of comparison.

Chamberlain was at the height of his reputation as a municipal reformer in the early 1890s. After a long, difficult passage, the Improvement Scheme finally showed a profit in 1891, removing a lingering cloud over his reputation as Mayor. There was a general growth of interest in municipal reform on both sides of the Atlantic, in part stimulated by the Progressives. Birmingham and Chamberlain received a good deal of favorable attention as a result. In June, 1890, one American magazine published an article on Birmingham since Chamberlain, entitled "The Best-Governed City in the World." Chamberlain fostered his reputation, and published an article on "Municipal Institutions in America and England" in an American journal. As usual, he held up Birmingham as the standard for other cities.[13]

Joseph Chamberlain, "Municipal Institutions in America and England", The Forum (Philadelphia), 14 (November, 1892): 276. Joseph Chamberlain, "Municipal Government--Past, Present and Future", The New Review, 10 (June, 1894):654. Gibbon and Bell, London County Council, p. 595.

[13]Julian Ralph, "The Best-Governed City in the World", Harper's Monthly Magazine, 81 (June, 1890):99-111. Chamberlain, "Municipal Institutions", The Forum, pp. 267-81.

Chamberlain's example also impressed some socialists, who were interested in its potential as a road to broader socialism. In 1887, Sidney Webb of the Fabian Society half-humorously described the unconscious socialism of the typical municipal reformer. He pictured the individualist city councillor in a world of municipal streets, municipal gas and water supplies, municipal markets, municipal parks, municipal tramways, municipal reading rooms, and municipal art galleries, museums and libraries, yet asserting, "Self-help, sir, individual self-help, that's what made our city what it is." [14]

The death of J. F. B. Firth in 1889 left a vacuum in policy formulation for the Progressive party which Webb slowly came to fill. In 1891, he published The London Programme, a series of eight Fabian Tracts. Much of the program was straight from Chamberlain: municipal control of the police, water, electricity, transport and the markets. Even Webb's calls for equalization of rates, and taxation of the unearned increment on land values, echoed some of Chamberlain's platform oratory of 1883 and 1885.

However, Webb went beyond Chamberlain. He provoked Chamberlain's violent disagreement with his recommendations for the Council's labor policy. His program recommended an eight hour day and a six day week for all public employees,

---

[14] Sidney Webb, Socialism in England, (Baltimore: American Economic Association, 1889), p. 65.

prohibition of overtime work except in emergencies, full liberty to unionize, direct employment of labor by the Council whenever possible, and a fair wages clause in all contracts that could not be avoided. For the 1892 municipal elections, the London Liberal and Radical Union adopted "The London (Progressive) Platform". It followed closely upon Webb's recommendations.[15]

This Fabian influence upon the Progressive party alarmed Chamberlain and his Conservative allies. When the Liberal government empowered a Royal Commission to consider the amalgamation of the City and County of London, the Conservatives came to the City's defense, resisting the aggrandizement of a body which was firmly controlled by the enemy. Chamberlain had long favored decentralization of the government of the Metropolis, and the Conservatives adopted his scheme. When the Royal Commission reported in favor of a unitary municipality for the Metropolis in 1894, the Conservatives opened a full-scale attack upon the London Progresssives. Chamberlain was one of the leaders of the attack.

As late as February, 1894, Chamberlain still expressed no strong animosity toward the Progressives. In his article

---

[15]Sidney Webb, The London Programme (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1891). A. M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 191-98. The London (Progressive) Platform is quoted in Albert Shaw, Municipal Government in Great Britain (N.Y.: The Century Company, 1895), pp. 349-53.

on "Municipal Institutions in America and England", he warned that the London County Council's labor policy "may easily be carried too far", leading to the type of corruption prevalent in American cities. However, he concluded that at present no damage had been done. He also raised the question of L. C. C. policy during debate on the local government bill. He spoke of the Council with respect, arguing that it "has made mistakes, as has every great Municipal or Local Authority, but I believe as it gains experience its mistakes will be fewer". He did wish, however, that the metropolitan boroughs had been reformed before the creation of the county council.[16]

In June, 1894, Chamberlain opened his attack on the London County Council with an article in The New Review entitled "Municipal Government--Past, Present and Future". In the article, Chamberlain leaned heavily on his reputation as a municipal reformer. After a brief historical survey of English municipal government and a description of its powers, he laid down the true principles of municipal enterprise. He noted that corruption in American municipal government showed that democracy alone will not avert abuses. The cause of American corruption, he asserted, was in the spoils system and consequent lax supervision

---

[16] Chamberlain, "Municipal Institutions", The Forum, p. 279. 4 Hansard, 21:820-21 (February 19, 1894).

of city administration by the Council. Municipal government had limits beyond which it did not function well. One limit was size--no more than half a million people should be governed from one center. In the area of enterprise, "The true sphere of municipal activity is limited to those things which the community can do better than the individual." Public bodies should not compete with private enterprise, and public employment should be no more remunerative than private employment:

> Certainly the public when it becomes an employer of labour, ought to act at least as generously towards its workpeople as the most liberal of private firms, but if it goes one inch beyond this, it is entering the downward path which has conducted so many American municipalities to their ruin; it is establishing at the cost of all ratepayers, and of the great mass of the working people themselves, a new class of privileged workmen, enjoying special advantages over their less fortunate fellows.

Such a policy, he said, was inconsistent with the full development of municipal energy.[17]

In November, 1894, Lord Salisbury expanded the Conservative attack on the L. C. C. to a full-scale political battle. He offered the support of the Conservative party to the Moderates. The Moderate party was reorganized under the name of the London Municipal Society, its constituency organization was expanded, and national political figures were enlisted to run for the Council. The election cam-

---

[17]Chamberlain, "Municipal Government", New Review, pp. 658-60.

paign of February and March, 1895 was hotly contested. In early February, Chamberlain spoke at Edinburgh Castle Hall, Stepney, making his most vitriolic attack on the Council. Its labor policy, he charged, was "creating a privileged body of employés". It was the beginning of the process which led to Tammany Hall in America. Their policy, if pursued, would undermine the efficiency of local government and make it impossible to carry on. He attacked the Council's policy of building working class housing. His alternative was to empower the metropolitan vestries to demolish buildings through improvement schemes, and then leave rebuilding to private contractors. The root of the problem, he argued, was the L. C. C.'s grasp for power, so the vestries must be turned into metropolitan boroughs to produce a balance of power in the metropolis.[18]

The Conservative attack on the Progressives was partly successful. Moderates and Progressives elected equal numbers of councillors, though the Progressive majority among the aldermen allowed them to keep control. The result was virtual paralysis of Progressive aims for three years. Further intervention by the Conservatives in the municipal elections of 1898 was unavailing, as the Progressives won a solid victory. In the short run, however, the

---

[18] London Municipal Life: A Speech by the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., February 6, 1895 (London: London Municipal Society, 1895).

London election allowed the Unionists to rehearse for their victory in the Parliamentary elections three months later. National politics had begun to invade local politics in a major way.[19]

His role in the Conservative attack cost Chamberlain his reputation as a municipal reformer. Frederick Dolman, a London Progressive, expressed a common view in an article on "Mr. Chamberlain's Municipal Career", in the Fortnightly Review for June, 1895. The article was a reasonably objective account of Chamberlain's career in the Birmingham Town Council and as Mayor. It noted the close relationship between party organization and municipal accomplishments in Birmingham during the 1870s. Without referring to current events, the article painted a picture of the parallels between the policy Chamberlain carried out in Birmingham in 1875 and the policy he attacked in London in 1895. The closing paragraph made the contrast explicit:

> But many who were then his helpers and supporters cannot but feel keen regret that, having led the battle of municipal progress in Birmingham, Mr. Chamberlain should have thrown in his lot with the forces of reaction in London. They remember what he must have forgotten when accusing the London County Council of "ambition"--that on his own confession he was always inclined "to magnify his office as councillor and mayor of Birmingham." . . . They remember what Mr. Chamberlain must have forgotten, when he joined company with those who never tire of cheap sneers at the Lon-

---

[19]Gibbon and Bell, London County Council, pp. 95-97. Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour, p. 81.

> don County Council--that on one historic occasion in Birmingham he declared that "municipal institutions represent the authority of the people. Any disrespect shown to us, any ridicule unduly cast upon our functions, strikes through us at the constituency itself and lowers our authority and our power of public usefulness!"[20]

Dolman pinpointed the essence of Chamberlain's shift to the forces of reaction. Chamberlain did not repudiate any program, idea or accomplishment of his period as Mayor of Birmingham. But, he refused absolutely to go beyond what he had done twenty years earlier. In taking his stand, he repudiated the spirit of his own accomplishments: the use of municipal institutions to solve the problems of the day. Dolman did not have to read Chamberlain out of the municipal reform movement, he had done it to himself.

iii

The attack on the London County Council marked the end of Joseph Chamberlain's close association with localism. In joining that attack, Chamberlain was on the side of nationalism against localism. The L. C. C. election of 1895 was more than a rehersal for the coming general election. It brought the power of one of the major national parties to bear to block the program of a local government.

---

[20]Frederick Dolman, "Mr. Chamberlain's Municipal Career", Fortnightly Review, N.S. 57 (June, 1895):904-12, quote from p. 912.

The Tory attitude in 1895 was very different from Conservative policy when Chamberlain was Mayor of Birmingham. Richard Cross, the Home Secretary, had consulted with Chamberlain on the Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875. The Tory Parliament had passed his gas and water bills. George Sclater-Booth, the President of the Local Government Board, had been so helpful in circumventing legal difficulties for the Improvement Scheme that Chamberlain wrote to Collings, "Hooray for the Tories!" [21] Now, municipal reform was municipal socialism and it was considered a threat to the middle class. Chamberlain's action showed the extent to which he had become a defender of the established order.

---

[21] Joseph Chamberlain to Jesse Collings, April 10, 1876, Chamberlain Papers, JC 5/16/51.

C O N C L U S I O N

Joseph Chamberlain was the first Englishman to become famous as a municipal reformer. Before him, there was no distinctive reform philosophy in municipal government. In Birmingham itself, the program of Dawson and Dale consisted mainly in changing the membership of the Town Council. Beyond a general application of business efficiency and good will to municipal administration, they had few specific suggestions. Chamberlain did not originate the program he implemented. Every one of his reforms had been carried out somewhere else before he became Mayor. What he did was to assemble them into a program, encourage others to add to it, publicize it extensively, and see that it had party backing at the polls.

Chamberlain's singular contribution to local politics was the degree to which he integrated party politics and municipal reform. While Mayor, he actively recruited talented businessmen and professionals for the Council, and then used the party machine to get them elected. This same machine elected parliamentary candidates, so he used it as a component in a coalition aiming at national power. This is the reason localism has such a broad meaning in a study of Chamberlain. In Birmingham politics, local government and local party organization were inseparable. He

assumed that it could be the same elsewhere.

Birmingham was Chamberlain's political base from 1873 until he died, and he handed it on to his sons. Had he been any less firmly supported, he could not have survived the Home Rule crisis. In Birmingham, his power rested on localism of the strongest kind. Chamberlain and his friends retained control of the town through their social and economic power, not through organization. The hostile critic who wrote "The Local Workings of the Birmingham Caucus" in 1885 recognized that fact, and Schnadhorst learned it, to his grief, in 1887. Schnadhorst won the struggle for control of the Birmingham Liberal Association, but he inherited an empty shell. Chamberlain promptly formed a new organization and beat him at the polls. What counted were the people and their ties to each other, not organization. Organization only made those relationships more effective.

Chamberlain's contributions to party organization had a deleterious effect on localism. The National Liberal Federation was never a true coalition of local elites. In the years after they unseated Chamberlain, the party leaders of other towns found that the Federation could be used as a mechanism for imposing national priorities on them. They generally retained control of their own localities, but their collective function was to support party policy and not create it.

Party organization reduced the scope of the Member of

Parliament. As national party cohesion increased, the general election became a referendum on who was to govern. The local candidate was often judged more upon his party label than his own abilities. Candidates were often outsiders to the district, recommended to the local Association by the party's central office. Less tied to their localities, their dependence upon party organization increased. By the turn of the century, party organization was fully in command.

During the time that Chamberlain was a Radical, localism was a _via media_ for him. With the exception of disestablishment, every item in the _Radical Programme_ was mediated through, or had implications for, local government. Localism was a safety control mechanism in his social politics in the 1880s. No matter how radical-sounding his proposals were, they were to be administered by local business elites upon the correct principles of honesty and efficiency.

His conversion to Unionism involved the loss of this _via media_. The Conservatives implemented Chamberlain's proposals because they saw that they were no threat to the existing order. Though he transferred his allegiance quickly in a crisis, Chamberlain was slow to come to terms with his new position. Only after 1889 did he again respond to political forces other than those directly involved with his own political survival. He did so in a manner

that reflected the political and social alignments of the 1890s. Every proposal took him away from localism. Only his ties to his own locality remained. After 1889, he rejected localism as a political philosophy.

Chamberlain's rejection of localism reflected a larger social process that was creating greater national cohesion in Britain. As a consequence of this cohesion, localism was a declining force in the 1890s. A national society, centered on the capital, began to supersede a looser society in which London was the most important center, but was supplemented by large provincial towns with their own political, social, and cultural pretensions and influence.

An important element of the growing national cohesion in Britain was a polarization of politics along the lines between nation-wide classes. The wealthy and important inhabitants of the towns were absorbed into a new national elite. Their numbers grew in the House of Commons, they were admitted into the peerage, they rubbed shoulders with dukes in the business world, and they sent their sons to Eton and Harrow. Traditional differences between aristocratic "ins" and bourgeois "outs" faded. Differences over religion were buried, and many middle class leaders lost their enthusiasm for reform and democracy. They differed little in their resistance to the pretensions of Labour.

The economic dimension of politics also came to center on London. Rather than pressure individual M.P.s, most

businesses found it more convenient to open a lobbying office in London, or to join an organization which had one. That way, they could bring direct pressure to bear upon the ministry and the departments of state. Even local governments fell into this pattern. The Municipal Corporations Association was formed in 1873 to oppose unfavorable legislation. County councils, urban district councils, rural district councils, and parish councils each formed their own associations soon after the councils themselves came into existence. Government draftsmen found it convenient to consult these representative associations before a bill was presented to Parliament, rather than be forced to alter it later.

Growing national cohesion paralleled a decline in the influence of the great provincial towns. In part, the new national forces produced the decline. Men of Chamberlain's generation and before found it impossible to enter national politics. They were thus forced to content themselves with local affairs. If an ambitious citizen could not add M.P. to his name, he might at least be able to acquire a J.P. By the 1890s, the barriers had been lowered. This had the effect of systematically looting town politics of many of their best men.

A second cause of decline was the growth in the size of the towns themselves. Chamberlain's observations about the maximum size for a viable local community were correct.

Above a population of half a million, the provincial towns began to lose their social cohesion. The middle class moved to the suburbs and no longer came into intimate contact with tradesmen or members of the working class. They did not run for municipal office and interested themselves little in the affairs of their city. Even the extension of the city boundary to include them did not make them interested, for their reasons for non-participation were social rather than political. Beatrice Webb noted the effect of their withdrawal while doing her local government study at the turn of the century. She heard that the old generation of businessmen councillors were dying off and not being replaced by men like themselves. There were constant complaints of a decline in the ability of councillors.

Wealthy businessmen had been a reforming force in municipal politics in the nineteenth century. Chamberlain had only been the most spectacular of many reformers. By 1900, most of the businessmen had withdrawn. Where they stayed, they usually joined the party of resistance. The working class was to be the creative force in local politics in the twentieth century. They did not have a majority on any town councils until after the First World War, but they entered into reform coalitions from the 1890s. Their model was the London Progressive party and not Chamberlain. The London Progressives applied Chamberlain's method of

political organization of municipal politics, but to different ends. In so doing, they generated a rival model of municipal reform. For a time, the two coexisted. Leeds went through a period of Chamberlainite reform in the 1890s, at the same time the Progressives were generating their program. But, the future belonged to the Progressives.

Municipal reform and localism are a different thing in twentieth century England than they were in the late nineteenth century. When he turned his back on them, Chamberlain repudiated some of his own past. The years from 1886 to 1895 were the period in which Chamberlain changed from a Radical to an Imperialist. As his Radicalism faded, so did his localism. By 1895, he had come to the end of both.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

I. Primary Sources

A. Manuscript Sources

1. Private Papers

Papers of Arthur Balfour, British Museum, London (Add. Mss. 49683-49962).

Papers of Joseph Chamberlain, Birmingham University Library, Birmingham.

Papers of Sir Charles Dilke, British Museum, London (Add. Mss. 43874-43967, 49385-49455, 49610-49612).

Papers of William E. Gladstone, British Museum, London (Add. Mss. 49683-49962).

2. Records of Government Departments. In the Public Record Office, London.

Cabinet Office

CAB 37 - Cabinet Papers, 1880-1914.

CAB 41 - Cabinet Letters in the Royal Archives, 1868-1916.

Local Government Board

M.H. 10 - Circulars, 1834-1951.

M.H. 15 - Index of Subjects.

M.H. 19 - Government Office--Correspondence.

H.L.G. 29 - Public Health and Local Government Legislation--Bill Papers.

B. Printed Sources

1. Great Britain, Laws, Statutes, etc.

Hundreds of General and Local Acts applied to local

government during the time Joseph Chamberlain was connected with it. The more important General Acts are listed here.

Vestries Act, 1818 (Sturges Bourne's Act). 58 George 3, ch. 69.

Poor Relief Act, 1819. 59 George 3, ch. 12.

Vestries Act, 1819. 59 George 3, ch. 85.

Lighting and Watching Act, 1833. 3 & 4 William 4, ch. 90.

Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834. 4 & 5 William 4, ch. 76.

Municipal Corporations Act, 1835. 5 & 6 William 4, ch. 76.

Lands Clauses Consolidation Act, 1845. 8 & 9 Victoria, ch. 18.

Baths and Washhouses Act, 1846. 9 & 10 Victoria, ch. 74.

Markets and Fairs Clauses Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 14.

Gasworks Clauses Consolidation Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 15.

Incorporation of Public Commissioners Clauses Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 16.

Waterworks Clauses Consolidation Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 17.

Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 34.

Town Police Clauses Act, 1847. 10 & 11 Victoria, ch. 89.

Public Health Act, 1848. 11 & 12 Victoria, ch. 63.

Small Tenements Rating Act, 1850. 13 & 14 Victoria, ch. 99.

Metropolis Management Act, 1855. 18 & 19 Victoria, ch. 120.

County and Borough Police Act, 1856. 19 & 20 Victoria, ch. 69.

Municipal Corporations Act, 1857. 20 & 21 Victoria, ch. 50.

Public Health Act, 1858. 21 & 22 Victoria, ch. 97.

Local Government Act, 1858. 21 & 22 Victoria, ch. 98.

Municipal Corporation Mortgages Act, 1860. 23 & 24 Victoria, ch. 16.

Public Improvement Act, 1860. 23 & 24 Victoria, ch. 30.

Local Government Amendment Act, 1861. 24 & 25 Victoria, ch. 61.

Highways Act, 1862. 25 & 26 Victoria, ch. 61.

Sewage Utilization Act, 1865. 28 & 29 Victoria, ch. 75.

Sanitary Act, 1866. 29 & 30 Victoria, ch. 90

Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, 1868 (Torrens' Act). 31 & 32 Victoria, ch. 130.

Assessed Rates Act, 1869. 32 & 33 Victoria, ch. 41.

Municipal Franchise Act, 1869. 32 & 33 Victoria, ch. 55

Sanitary Loans Act, 1869. 32 & 33 Victoria, ch. 100.

Elementary Education Act, 1870. 33 & 34 Victoria, ch. 75.

Tramways Act, 1870. 33 & 34 Victoria, ch. 78.

Local Government Board Act, 1871. 34 & 35 Victoria, ch. 70.

Ballot Act, 1872. 35 & 36 Victoria, ch. 33.

Public Health Act, 1872. 35 & 36 Victoria, ch. 79.

Borough Funds Act, 1872. 35 & 36 Victoria, ch. 91.

Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act, 1875. 38 & 39 Victoria, ch. 36.

Public Health Act, 1875. 38 & 39 Victoria, ch. 55.

Municipal Corporations (New Charters) Act, 1877. 40 & 41 Victoria, ch. 69.

Municipal Corporations Act, 1882. 45 & 46 Victoria, ch. 50.

Electric Lighting Act, 1882. 45 & 46 Victoria, ch. 56.

Municipal Corporations (Unreformed) Act, 1883. 46 & 47 Victoria, ch. 18.

Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, 1884. 47 & 48 Victoria, ch. 70.

Allotments Act, 1887. 50 & 51 Victoria, ch. 48.

County Electors Act, 1888. 51 & 52 Victoria, ch. 10.

Local Government Act, 1888 (County Councils Act). 51 & 52 Victoria, ch. 41.

Allotments Act, 1890. 53 & 54 Victoria, ch. 65.

Small Holdings Act, 1892. 55 & 56 Victoria, ch. 30.

Local Government Act, 1894 (District and Parish Councils Act. 57 & 58 Victoria, ch. 73.

London Government Act, 1899. 62 & 63 Victoria, ch. 14.

Education Act, 1902. 2 Edward 7, ch. 42.

2. Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates.

Great Britain. Parliament. Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd. series, vols. 233 (1877), 249 (1879), 324 (1888), 4th. series, vols. 19 (1893), 20 (1893), 21 (1894).

3. Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers.

All references are to Great Britain. Parliament. Parliamentary Papers (Commons).

"Report of the Select Committee on Municipal Corporations". 1833 (344), vol. 13, pp. 1-391.

"Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws". 1834 (44), vols. 27-39.

"Report of the Royal Commission on County Rates". 1835 (57) and (508), vol. 36.

"Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations". 1835 (116), (135), (386), and (434), vols. 23-26, 40; 1837 (203) and (239), vols. 25, 41; 1837-38 (686), vol. 35; 1839 (402), vol. 18.

"Returns of Parliamentary Electors in Boroughs". 1837-38 (329) and (531), vol. 44, p. 555 ff., 859 ff; 1849 (16), vol. 45, p. 175 ff.

"Return of All Boroughs Not Coterminous with Parishes". 1860 (268), vol. 55, p. 83.

"Return for Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Dublin, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Salford, Aberdeen and Dundee, Showing Revenue, Population in 1851, No. of Parliamentary Voters, No. of Members". 1860 (393), vol. 55, p. 135.

"Return of Number of Registered Electors in Municipal Boroughs and Number of Voters, 1852-65". 1867 (11), vol. 56, p. 355.

"Returns of Number of Boroughs Using the Small Tenements Rating Act." 1867 (136), (207), and (488), vol. 56, p. 449, 471; vol. 60, p. 33.

"Report of the Royal Commission on the Sanitary Laws". First Report.(Minutes of Evidence). 1868-69 [4218], vol. 32. Second Report. 1871 [c. 281], vol. 35. Statutes and Papers. 1871 [c. 281-I], vol. 35. Minutes of Evidence. 1871 [c. 281-II], vol. 35.

"First Report of the Local Government Board". 1872 [c. 516], vol. 28.

"Return of Number of Registered Electors in Parliamentary and Municipal Boroughs for 1866, 1869 and 1873". 1874 (381), vol. 53, p. 43.

"Report of the Select Committee on Town Sewage". 1876 (410), vol. 27.

"Report of the Select Committee on Electric Lighting". 1878-79 (224), vol. 11, p. 375.

"Report of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations". 1880 [c. 2490], [c. 2490-I], vol. 31.

"Report from the Select Committee on the Electric Lighting Bill". 1882 (227), vol. 10, p. 463.

"Report from the Select Committee on the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders Bills". 1883 (288), vol. 11, p. 375.

"Return of Number of Registered Electors in Municipal Boroughs for 1885". 1884-85 (260-I), vol. 67, p. 23.

"Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes". 1884-85 [c. 4402, -I, -II, -III], vol. 30; 1884-85 [c. 4409, -I] [c. 4547, -I, -II], vol. 31.

"Allotments Bill, 1886". 1886 (57-Sess. I), vol. 1, p. 17.

"Return of Circular Letters Addressed by the Local Government Board on Pauperism and Distress". 1886 (69-Sess. I), vol. 56, p. 179.

"Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Disturbances, February 8, 1886". 1886 [c. 4665], vol. 34, p. 381.

"Report of the Royal Commission on the Amalgamation of the City and County of London". 1894 [c. 7493], vols. 17 and 18.

"Report of the Select Committee on Distress from Want of Employment". First Report. 1895 (111), vol. 8, p. 1. Second Report. 1895 (253), vol. 8, p. 215. Third Report. 1895 (365), vol. 9, p. 1. Final Report. 1896 (321), vol. 9, p. 301.

Account of the Statutory Growth of the Local Government Board, in "Forty-Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1918-19". 1919 [cmd. 413], vol. 24, p. 379.

"Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government". 1924-25 [cmd. 2504], vol. 14. 1928-29 [cmd. 3213], vol. 8. 1929-30 [cmd. 3436], vol. 15.

4. Borough of Birmingham.

Proceedings of the Council. Birmingham: George Jones and Son, Town Hall Printing Office, 1872ff.

Report of the Sewage Inquiry Committee, Presented to the Council on the 3rd of October, 1871. London: Simkin, Marshall and Company, 1871.

A Short History of the Passing of the Birmingham (Corporation) Gas Act and the Birmingham (Corporation) Water Act, with the Speeches of the Mayor (Joseph Chamberlain, Esq.) in Support of these Measures, and also in Favour of the Adoption of the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act. Birmingham: General Purposes Committee, 1875.

5. Newspapers.

Birmingham Daily Post. (Birmingham)

Birmingham Faces and Places: An Illustrated Local Magazine (Birmingham)

Birmingham Mercury. (Birmingham)

Birmingham Morning News. (Birmingham)

The Daily News. (London)

The Liberal. (Published by the Birmingham Liberal Association)

The Manchester Guardian. (Manchester)

The Times. (London)

6. Contemporary Journals.

The Fortnightly Review.

The Forum. (Philadelphia)

Macmillan's Magazine.

The National Review.

The New Review.

The Nineteenth Century.

The North American Review.

The Westminister Review.

7. Contemporary Reference Works.

The Annual Register of World Events.

The Biograph and Review.

Birmingham Red Book and Reference Almanack.

The Constitutional Year Book.

Cornish's Birmingham Year Book.

The Liberal and Radical Year Book and Statesman's Encyclopedia.

The Liberal Year Book.

McCalmont, Frederick Haynes. McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book: British Election Results, 1832-1918. 8th ed. Edited by J. Vincent and M. Stenton. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971.

8. Works by Joseph Chamberlain.

"The Manufacture of Iron Wood Screws." In The Resources, Products and Industrial History of Birmingham, pp. 604-09. Edited by Samuel Timmins. London: R. Hardwicke, 1866; reprint ed., London: Frank Cass and Company, 1967.

"The Liberal Party and Its Leaders." Fortnightly Review N.S. 14 (September, 1873):287-302.

"The Next Page of the Liberal Programme." Fortnightly Review N.S. 16 (October, 1874):405-29.

"The Right Method with the Publicans." Fortnightly Review N.S. 19 (May, 1876):631-51.

"A Visit to Lapland with Notes on Swedish Licensing." Fortnightly Review N.S. 20 (December, 1876):691-708.

"Municipal Public Houses." Fortnightly Review N.S. 21 (February, 1877):147-59.

"A New Political Organization." Fortnightly Review N.S. 28 (July, 1877):126-34.

"The Caucus." Fortnightly Review N.S. 30 (November, 1878):721-41.

"Labourers' and Artizans' Dwellings." Fortnightly Review N.S. 34 (December, 1883):761-76.

Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P. Edited by Henry W. Lucy. London: G. Routledge and Son, 1885.

The Radical Programme. London: Chapman and Hall, 1885; reprint ed., edited and with an introduction by D. A. Hamer, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1971.

A Radical. "A Radical View of the Irish Crisis." Fortnightly Review N.S. 39 (February, 1886):273-84.

"Favorable Aspects of State Socialism." North American Review 152 (May, 1891):534-48.

"Old Age Pensions." National Review 28 (February, 1892): 721-39.

"The Labour Question." Nineteenth Century 32 (November, 1892):675-710.

"Municipal Institutions in America and England." The Forum (Philadelphia) 14 (November, 1892):267-81.

"Municipal Government--Past, Present and Future." New Review 10 (June, 1894):649-61.

"Old Age Pensions and Friendly Societies." National Review 24 (January, 1895):592-615.

London Municipal Life: A Speech by the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., February 6, 1895. London: London Municipal Society, 1895.

Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches. Edited by Charles W. Boyd. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914.

A Political Memoir, 1880-1892. Edited by C. H. D. Howard. London: Batchwood Press, 1953.

9. Contemporary Articles, Books and Pamphlets.

A Birmingham Tory. "The Local Workings of the Birmingham Caucus." National Review 6 (November, 1885):358-69.

Adams, Francis. History of the Elementary School Contest in England. London: Chapman and Hall, 1882.

Birmingham Liberal Association. Officers, 1873, Representatives from Wards Forming the Central Executive Committee. Birmingham: Birmingham Liberal Association, 1873.

Birmingham Liberal Association, Rotton Park Ward. The Improvement Scheme and the Coming Elections: A Speech by Councillor R. Tangye, August 25, 1879. Birmingham: Birmingham Liberal Association, 1879.

Brindley, J. M. The Homes of the Working Classes and the Promises of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P. Westminister: National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, 1884.

Chadwick, Edwin. Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain. London: n.p.,

1842; reprint ed., edited by M. W. Flinn, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1965.

Crosskey, Henry W. "The Liberal Association--The '600' of Birmingham." Macmillan's Magazine 35 (February, 1877):299-307.

Crosskey, Henry W. "The Birmingham Liberal Association and Its Assailants." Macmillan's Magazine 39 (December, 1878):151-57.

Dicey, Edward. "The Lesson of Birmingham." Nineteenth Century 25 (May, 1889):641-52.

Dolman, Frederick. "Mr. Chamberlain's Municipal Career." Fortnightly Review N.S. 57 (June, 1895):904-12.

Fabian Society. "To Your Tents, Oh Israel!" Fortnightly Review N.S. 54 (November, 1893):569-89.

Goschen, George J. Reports and Speeches on Local Taxation. London: Macmillan and Company, 1872.

Harris, William. The History of the Radical Party in Parliament. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench and Company, 1885.

[London County Council.] A Collection of Handbills and Pamphlets Concerning the London County Council and the Municipal Elections of 1894-95. Cambridge: Harvard University Library, 1899.

Marriott, William T. "The Birmingham Caucus." Nineteenth Century 11 (June, 1882):949-65.

Massingham, H. W. "The Government and Labour." Contemporary Review 64 (December, 1893):764-76.

Mearns, Andrew. The Bitter Cry of Outcast London. London: James Clarke and Company, 1883; reprint edition, edited with an introduction by Anthony Wohl, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1970.

"Mr. Chamberlain." Westminister Review 128 (June, 1887): 265-82.

[National Liberal Federation] Proceedings Attending the Formation of the National Federation of Liberal Associations; With Report of Conference Held in Birmingham on Thursday, May 31st, 1877. Birmingham: The "Journal" Printing Offices, 1877.

[National Liberal Federation.] The National Liberal Federation: Its General Objects and Immediate Work. Birmingham: National Liberal Federation, 1880.

"The Organization of the Liberal Party: Mr. Schnadhorst." Westminister Review 128 (April, 1887): 104-12.

Osborne, Edward Corn. Facts and Figures in Relation to the Sewage Question, Being the Substance of a Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Birmingham Town Council, June 27th, 1871, Published by Request. Birmingham: E. C. Osborne, 84 New Street, July 4, 1871.

Ralph, Julian. "The Best-Governed City in the World." Harper's Monthly Magazine 81 (June, 1890):99-111.

"The Reorganization of the Liberal Party." Westminister Review 128 (July, 1887):393-403.

Salisbury, Robert Cecil, Marquis of. "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings." National Review 2 (November, 1883):301-16.

Schnadhorst, Francis. County Organization: A Paper Read at a Conference of Liberals Held at Cardiff, on October 28th, 1880. Birmingham: National Liberal Federation, 1880.

Smith, Joshua Toulmin. Local Self-Government and Centralization. London: J. Chapman, 1851.

Smith, Joshua Toulmin. The Parish: Its Powers and Obligations at Law. 2nd. edition. London: H. Sweet, 1857.

Smith, Edward Orford. "Municipal Finance, or Local Taxation and Local Expenditure as Illustrated by the Case of the City of Birmingham." Journal of the Royal Statistical Society 58 (June, 1895):327-58.

Stewart, Alexander P. and Jenkins, Edward. The Medical and Legal Aspects of Sanitary Reform. London: Robert Hardwicke, 1867; reprint edition, with an introduction by M. W. Flinn, N.Y.: Humanities Press, 1969.

Stuart, James. "The London Progressives." Contemporary Review 61 (April, 1892):521-32.

Webb, Sidney. Socialism in England. Baltimore: American Economic Association, 1889.

Webb, Sidney. The London Programme. London: S. Sonnenschein, 1891.

Wilson, Edward D. J. "The Caucus and Its Consequences." Nineteenth Century 4 (October, 1878):695-712.

II. Secondary Works

A. Works on Joseph Chamberlain

"Biographical Sketch of Alderman Joseph Chamberlain, Mayor of Birmingham." British Mercantile Gazette (1876).

Brown, James B. "The Temperance Career of Joseph Chamberlain, 1870-1877: A Study in Political Frustration." Albion 4 (Spring, 1972):29-44.

Communist Party of Birmingham. The Legacy of Joseph Chamberlain. Birmingham: Moody Brothers, 1936.

Escott, Thomas Hay Sweet. "The Party of Two--Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain." In Personal Forces of the Period, pp. 69-82. London: Hurst and Blackett, 1898.

Fraser, Peter. Joseph Chamberlain: Radicalism and Empire, 1868-1914. London: Cassell and Company, 1966.

Garvin, James Louis, and Amery, Julian. The Life of Joseph Chamberlain. 6 vols. London: Macmillan and Company, 1932-1970.

Gulley, Elsie E. Joseph Chamberlain and English Social Politics. New York: Columbia University Press, 1926.

Housman, Laurence. "The Man of Business." In Dethronements: Imaginary Portraits of Political Characters Done in Dialogue: Charles Stewart Parnell, Joseph Chamberlain. Woodrow Wilson, pp. 34-68. New York: Macmillan Company, 1923.

Howard, C. H. D. "Joseph Chamberlain and the 'Unauthorized Programme'." English Historical Review 65 (October, 1950):477-491.

Howard, C. H. D. "Joseph Chamberlain, Parnell, and the Irish 'Central Board' Scheme, 1884-1885." Irish Historical Studies 8 (1953):324-61.

Hurst, Michael. Joseph Chamberlain and West Midland Politics, 1886-1895. Occasional Paper of the Dugdale Society, No. 15. Oxford: Vivian Ridler, 1962.

Hurst, Michael. Joseph Chamberlain and the Liberal Reunion: The Round Table Conference of 1887. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

B. Biographies and Autobiographies

Aronson, David M. "Jesse Collings, Agrarian Radical, 1880-1895." Ph. D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, 1975.

Bassett, A. Tilney. The Life of the Rt. Hon. John Edward Ellis, M.P. London: Macmillan and Company, 1914.

Bridges, John A. Reminiscences of a Country Politician. London: T. Werner Laurie, 1906.

Cecil, Lady Gwendolin. Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury. 4 vols. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1922-1932.

Churchill, Winston. Lord Randolph Churchill. 2 vols. London: Odhams Press, 1906.

Fowler, Edith Henrietta [Hamilton]. The Life of Henry Hartley Fowler, First Viscount Wolverhampton. London; Hutchinson and Company, 1912.

Gardnier, A. G. Life of Sir William Harcourt. 2 vols. New York: George H. Doran, Company, 1929.

Gwynn, Stephen, and Tugwell, G. M. The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Dilke. 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1917.

Morley, John. The Life of William Ewart Gladstone. 3 vols. New York: Macmillan Company, 1903.

Morley, John. Recollections. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

Muirhead, John Henry, ed. Nine Famous Birmingham Men. 2nd edition. Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1909.

Rhodes James, Robert. Lord Randolph Churchill. New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1959.

Webb, Beatrice. My Apprenticeship. London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1926.

Webb, Beatrice. Our Partnership. Edited by Barbara Drake. London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1948.

C. Local Government and Local Politics.

1. General.

Briggs, Asa. Victorian Cities. New York: Harper and Row, 1963; Paperback edition, New York: Harper and Row, Colophon Books, 1970.

Bulpitt, J. G. Party Politics in English Local Government. Monographs in Politics. London: Longman's Green and Company, 1967.

Cannan, Edwin. The History of Local Rates in England: Five Lectures. Studies in Economics and Political Science. London: Longman's Green and Company, 1896.

Church, Roy A. Economic and Social Changes in a Midland Town: Victorian Nottingham, 1815-1900. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1966.

Cobden Club. Local Government and Taxation in the United Kingdom. Edited by J. W. Probyn. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin and Company, 1882.

Darwin, Leonard. Municipal Trade: The Advantages and Disadvantages Resulting from the Substitution of Representative Bodies for Private Proprietors in the Management of Industrial Undertakings. London: John Murray, 1903.

Dolman, Frederick. Municipalities at Work: The Municipal Policy of Six Great Towns and Its Influence on Their Social Welfare. London: Metheuen and Company, 1895.

Drummond, J. M. The Finance of Local Government: England and Wales. The New Town and County Hall Series. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1952.

Finer, Herman. English Local Government. London: Metheuen and Company, 1933.

Fraser, Derek. "Areas of Urban Politics: Leeds, 1830-80." In The Victorian City: Images and Realities, vol. 2.

Edited by H. J. Dyos and M. Wolff. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Freeman, T. W. The Conurbations of Great Britain. 2nd. ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1966.

Gibbon, Sir Gwilym, and Bell, Reginald W. The History of the London County Council, 1889-1939. London: Macmillan and Company, 1939.

Grice, James Watson. National and Local Finance: A Review of the Relations between Central and Local Authorities in England, France, Belgium and Prussia during the Nineteenth Century. London: P. S. King and Son, 1910.

Hasluck, Eugene Lewis. Local Government in England. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936.

Hawson, H. Keeble. Sheffield: The Growth of a City, 1893-1926. Sheffield: J. W. Northend, 1968.

Hennock, E. P. "Urban Sanitary Reform a Generation Before Chadwick?" Economic History Review, 2nd. series, 10 (1957):113-19.

Hennock, E. P. "Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900." Historical Journal 6 (1963):212-25.

Hepworth, N. P. The Finance of Local Government. Revised by W. A. C. Kitching. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971.

Jones, G. W. Borough Politics: A Study of the Wolverhampton Town Council, 1888-1964. London: Macmillan and Company, 1969.

Keith-Lucas, Brian. The English Local Government Franchise: A Short History. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952.

Keith-Lucas, Brian. "Some Influences Affecting the Development of Sanitary Legislation in England." Economic History Review, 2nd. series, 6 (1953-54):290-96.

Kellett, J. R. The Impact of Railways on Victorian Cities. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Laski, Harold J., Jennings, W. Ivor, and Robinson, W. H., eds. A Century of Municipal Progress, 1835-1935. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1935.

Marshall, A. H. Financial Administration in Local Government. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960.

Munson, J. E. B. "The London School Board Election of 1894: A Study in Victorian Religious Controversy." British Journal of Educational Studies 23 (February, 1975):7-23.

Redford, Arthur. The History of Local Government in Manchester. 3 vols. London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1939-40.

Redlich, Josef, and Hirst, Francis W. Local Government in England. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan Company, 1903.

Robson, William A. The Relations of Central and Local Government. London: Fabian Research Series No. 5, 1972.

Robson, William A. The Development of Local Government. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1931.

Shaw, Albert. Municipal Government in Great Britain. New York: The Century Company, 1895.

Smellie, K. B. A History of Local Government. 4th ed. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1968.

Spencer, Frederick Herbert. Municipal Origins: An Account of English Private Bill Legislation Relating to Local Government, 1740-1835. London: Constable and Company, 1911.

Thompson, Paul. Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The Struggle for London, 1885-1914. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

Viger, Francios. Change and Apathy: Liverpool and Manchester During the Industrial Revolution. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1970.

Warren, J. H. The English Local Government System. 3rd. ed. The New Town and Country Hall Series. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1953.

Webb, Sidney, and Webb, Beatrice. English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act. 9 vols. London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1906-29.

Weber, Adna Ferrin. The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Statistics. New York: Macmillan Company, 1899; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963.

White, Brian D. A History of the Corporation of Liverpool. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951.

Wright, Sir Robert S., and Hobhouse, Henry. An Outline of Local Government and Local Taxation in England and Wales (Excluding London). 4th ed. London: Sweet and Maxwell, P. S. King and Son, 1914.

Zangerl, Carl H. E. "The Social Composition of the County Magistracy in England and Wales, 1831-1887." Journal of British Studies 11 (November, 1971):113-25.

2. Central-Local Relations.

Brebner, J. B. "Laissez-Faire and State Intervention in Nineteenth Century Britain." Journal of Economic History supplement 8 (1948):59-73.

Bowen, Howard R. English Grants-in-Aid: A Study in the Finance of Local Government. University of Iowa Studies in Social Science, vol. 9, no. 1. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa, 1939.

Brice, Seward. A Treatise on the Doctrine of Ultra Vires: Being and Investigation of the Principles which Limit the Capacities, Powers and Liabilities of Corporations, and More Especially Joint Stock Companies. London: Stevens and Haynes, 1874.

Chester, D. N. Central and Local Government: Financial and Administrative Relations. London: Macmillan and Company, 1951.

Clifford, Frederick. A History of Private Bill Legislation. 2 vols. London: Butterworths, 1885-87; reprint ed. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968.

Cromwell, Valerie. "Interpretations of Nineteenth Century Administration: an Analysis." Victorian Studies 9 (March, 1966):245-55.

Dicey, A. V. Law and Public Opinion in the Nineteenth Century. London: Macmillan and Company, 1903.

Finer, S. E. "Individual Responsibility of Ministers." Public Administration 34 (1956):381-94.

Griffith, J. A. B. Central Departments and Local Authorities. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1966.

Gutchen, Robert M. "Local Improvements and Centralization in Nineteenth Century England." Historical Journal 4 (1961):85-96.

Hart, Jennifer. "Nineteenth Century Social Reform: A Tory Interpretation of History." Past and Present 31 (July, 1965):37-61.

Hart, Jennifer M. "Reform of the Borough Police, 1835-1856." English Historical Review 70 (July, 1955):411-27.

Hart, Jennifer M. "The County and Borough Police Act, 1856." Public Administration 33 (Winter, 1956):405-17

Ilbert, Sir Courtenay. Legislative Methods and Forms. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1901.

Keith-Lucas, Brian. "Municipal Boroughs and Ultra Vires." Public Administration 27 (Summer, 1949):87-90.

Lambert, Royston J. "Central and Local Relations in Mid-Victorian England: The Local Government Act Office, 1858-71." Victorian Studies 6 (1962-63):121-50.

Lubenow, William C. The Politics of Government Growth: Early Victorian Attitudes Toward State Intervention, 1833-48. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971.

MacDonagh, Oliver. "The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal." Historical Journal 1 (1958):52-67.

Macleod, Roy M. Treasury Control and Social Administration: A Study of Establishment Growth at the Local Government Board, 1871-1905. London: Bell, 1968.

Parris, Henry. "The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government: A Reappraisal Reappraised." Historical Journal 3 (1960):17-37.

Parris, Henry. Constitutional Bureaucracy: The Development of British Central Administration Since the Eighteenth Century. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1969.

Roberts, David. "Jeremy Bentham and the Victorian Administrative State." Victorian Studies 2 (1959):193-210.

Roberts, David. Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Robson, William A. The Relations of Central and Local Government. Fabian Research Series No. 5. Nendeln, Leichtenstein: Kraus Reprints, 1972.

Schulz, Maureen. "The Development of the Grant System." In Essays in Local Government, pp. 113-160. Edited by Charles H. Wilson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1948.

Schulz, Maureen. "The Control of Local Authority Borrowing by the Central Government." In Essays in Local Government, pp. 161-203. Edited by Charles H. Wilson. London: Basil Blackwell, 1948.

Stansky, Peter, ed. The Victorian Revolution: Government and Society in Victoria's Britain. New York: Franklin Watts, New Viewpoints, 1973.

Sutherland, Gillian, ed. Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth Century Government. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

Williams, Orlo C. The Historical Development of Private Bill Procedure and Standing Orders in the House of Commons. 2nd. ed., 2 vols. London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1948-49.

Willson, F. M. G. "Ministries and Boards: Some Aspects of Administrative Development Since 1832." Public Administration 33 (Spring, 1955):43-58.

3. Birmingham.

Allen, G. C. The Industrial Development of Birmingham and the Black Country, 1860-1927. 3rd ed. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1966.

Anderton, Thomas. A Tale of One City: The New Birmingham. Birmingham: Midland Counties Herald Office, 1900.

Briggs, Asa. History of Birmingham, vol. 2: Borough and City, 1865-1938. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Briggs, Asa. "Social Structure in Birmingham and Lyons." British Journal of Sociology 1 (1950):67-80.

Bunce, John Thackray. History of the Corporation of Birmingham. 2 vols. Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1878-1884.

Corbett, John. The Birmingham Trades Council, 1866-1966. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1966.

Dent, Robert Kirkup. The Making of Birmingham: Being a History of the Rise and Growth of a Midland Metropolis. Birmingham: J. L. Allday, 1894.

Gill, Conrad. History of Birmingham, vol. 1: Manor and Borough to 1865. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Green, Christopher. "Birmingham's Politics, 1873-1891: The Local Basis of Change." Midland History 2 (Autumn, 1973):84-98.

Harris, William. The History of Our Shakespeare Club. Birmingham: Birmingham Journal Printing Office, 1903.

Hennock, E. P. Fit and Proper Persons: Ideal and Reality in Nineteenth Century Urban Government. London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., 1973.

Langford, John Alfred. Modern Birmingham and Its Institutions: A Chronicle of Local Events from 1841 to 1871. 2 vols. Birmingham: William Downing, 1871.

Tholfsen, Trygve R. "The Origins of the Birmingham Caucus." Historical Journal 2 (1959):161-84.

Tholfsen, Trygve R. "The Artizan and the Culture of Early Victorian Birmingham." University of Birmingham Historical Journal 4 (1954):146-66.

Vance, James E., Jr. "Housing the Worker: Determinative and Contingent Ties in Nineteenth Century Birmingham." Economic Geography 43 (April, 1967):95-127.

Waterhouse, Rachel E. The Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1854-1954. Birmingham: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1954.

Wright, G. Henry. Chronicles of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, A. D. 1813-1913, and of the Birmingham Commercial Society, A. D. 1783-1812. Birmingham: n.p., 1913.

D. National Politics and Government

Barker, Michael. Gladstone and Radicalism: The Reconstruction of Liberal Policy in Britain, 1885-94. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975.

Blewett, Neal. "The Franchise in the United Kingdom, 1885-1918." Past and Present 32 (December, 1965):27-56.

Brown, Kenneth D., ed. Essays in Anti-Labour History: Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain. London: Macmillan and Company, 1974.

Clayden, Peter William. England Under the Coalition: The History of Great Britain and Ireland from the General Election of 1885 to May, 1892. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892.

Cole, G. D. H. British Working Class Politics, 1832-1914. London: Labour Book Service, 1941.

Cornford, James. "The Transformation of Conservatism in the Late Nineteenth Century." Victorian Studies 7 (September, 1963):35-66.

Cooke, A. B., and Vincent, John. The Governing Passion: Cabinet Government and Party Politics in Britain, 1885-86. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1974.

Duffy, A. E. P. "New Unionism in Britain, 1889-1890: a Reappraisal." Economic History Review, 2nd ser. 14 (December, 1961):306-19.

Dunbabin, J. P. D. "The Politics of the Establishment of County Councils." Historical Journal 6 (1963):226-52.

Dunbabin, J. P. D. "Expectations of the New County Councils, and their Realization." Historical Journal 8 (1965): 353-79.

Emy, H. V. Liberals, Radicals and Social Politics, 1892-1914. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Finlayson, G. B. A. M. "The Municipal Corporations Commission and Report, 1833-35." Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 36 (May, 1963):36-52.

Finlayson, G. B. A. M. "The Politics of Municipal Reform, 1835." English Historical Review 81 (1966):673-92.

Fraser, Peter. "The Liberal Unionist Alliance: Chamberlain, Hartington and the Conservatives, 1886-1904." English Historical Review 77 (January, 1962):53-78.

Hamer, David Allan. Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: A Study in Leadership and Policy. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Hanham, H. J. Elections and Party Management: Politics in the Time of Disraeli and Gladstone. London: Longman's, Green and Company, 1959.

Harrison, Royden. Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.

Herrick, F. H. "The Origins of the National Liberal Federation." Journal of Modern History 17 (June, 1945): 116-29.

Heyck, Thomas William. "British Radical M.P.s, 1874-1895: New Evidence from Discriminant Analysis." Albion 4 (1972):51-52.

Heyck, Thomas William. "British Radicals and Radicalism, 1874-1895: A Social Analysis." In Modern European Social History, pp. 28-58. Edited by Robert J. Bezucha. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1972.

Heyck, Thomas William. The Dimensions of British Radicalism: The Case of Ireland, 1874-95. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974.

Jones, Andrew. The Politics of Reform, 1884. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Lawrence, Elwood Parsons. Henry George in the British Isles. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957.

Lloyd, Trevor. The General Election of 1880. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

McBriar, A. M. Fabian Socialism and English Politics, 1884-1918. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Malament, Barbara C. "The Origins of the British Labour Party: Some Interpretative Problems." A paper delivered to the Conference on British Studies, meeting at New York University, November 6, 1876.

McGill, Barry. "Francis Schnadhorst and Liberal Party Organization." Journal of Modern History (March, 1962); reprinted in The Victorian Revolution: Government and Society in Victoria's Britain, pp. 255-83. Edited by Peter Stansky. New York: Franklin Watts, New Viewpoints, 1973.

Moore, D. C. "Political Morality in Mid-Nineteenth Century England: Concepts, Norms, Violations." Victorian Studies 13 (September, 1969):5-36.

Ostrogorski, Moisei. Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties. Translated by Frederick Clarke. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Company, 1902.

Pelling, Henry. The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900. 2nd. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.

Pelling, Henry. Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967.

Read, Donald. The English Provinces c. 1760-1960, A Study in Influence. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964.

Roberts, Benjaman Charles. The Trades Union Congress, 1868-1921. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.

Shannon, Catherine B. "The Ulster Liberal Unionists and Local Government Reform, 1885-98." Irish Historical Studies 18 (March, 1973):407-23.

Smith, Paul. Disrealian Conservatism and Social Reform. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

Thomas, J. A. The House of Commons, 1832-1901: A Study of Its Economic and Functional Character. Cardiff; University of Wales Press Board, 1939.

Vincent, John. The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-1868. London: Constable and Company, 1966.

Watson, Robert Spence. The National Liberal Federation. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907.

Wolfe, Willard. From Radicalism to Socialism: Men and Ideas in the Formation of Fabian Socialist Doctrines, 1881-1889. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

E. General Histories and Social Histories

Ashworth, William. An Economic History of England, 1870-1939. London: Metheuen and Company, 1960.

Best, Geoffrey. Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-1875. London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1971.

Briggs, Asa. "The Language of 'Class' in Early Nineteenth Century England." In Essays in Labour History Edited by Asa Briggs and John Saville. London: Macmillan and Company, 1960.

Dyos, Harold J., and Wolff, Michael. The Victorian City. 2 vols. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.

Harrison, Brian. Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872. London: Faber and Faber, 1971.

Kunze, Neal Lee. "English Working Class Housing: A Problem of Social Control." Ph. D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1971.

Lambert, Royston. Sir John Simon, 1816-1904 and English Social Administration. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1963.

Lowell, A. Lawrence. The Government of England. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Company, 1908.

Lynd, Helen M. England in the 1880s: Toward a Social Basis for Freedom. New York: Oxford University Press, 1945.

Mitchell, Brian R., and Deane, Phyllis. Abstract of British Historical Statistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Perkin, Harold. The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.

Pumphrey, Ralph E. "The Introduction of Industrialists into the British Peerage: A Study in Adaptation of a Social Institution." American Historical Review 65 (October, 1959):1-16.

Ryder, Judith, and Silver, Harold. Modern English Society: History and Structure, 1850-1970. London: Methcuen and Company, 1970.

Tholfsen, Trygve R. "The Transition to Democracy in Victorian England." International Review of Social History 6 (Pt. 2, 1961):226-48.

Weber, Max. "Class, Status, Party." In Class, Status and Power: A Reader in Social Stratification, pp. 68-70. Edited by Reinhard Bendix, Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963